



**MEXICO**  
Past and Present

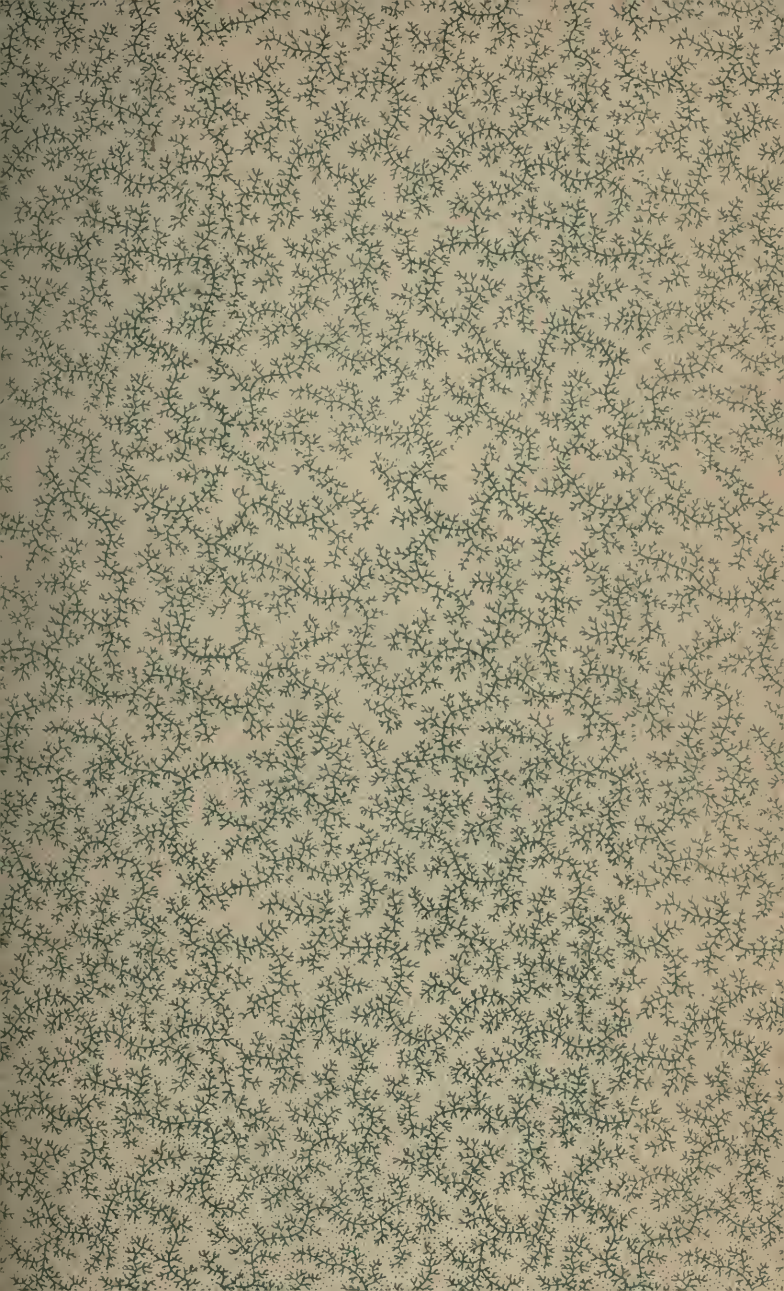


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STUCCO-RELIEF PALANQUES, CHIAPAS.

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# ABOUT MEXICO,

## PAST AND PRESENT.

BY  
HANNAH MORE JOHNSON.

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WITH SIXTY-THREE MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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## PREFACE.

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IT is not judged needful by either author or publisher to assign reasons for laying before the public these chapters *About Mexico, Past and Present*, much less to apologize for so doing, save as they may be inadequate to the importance and the interest of the subject. Our "next neighbor" on the south needs and deserves to be understood by the citizens of the United States, and especially by those who have at heart the welfare of their fellow-men and desire the extension to them of the blessings of a pure and elevating Bible Christianity. Near neighborhood enhances all the motives which would lead us to study another nation and emphasizes our obligation so to do. In the case of Mexico the romance of her history as well as the wonders of her land and the hope of her future renders interest in her people and in their welfare easy.

Among the many authorities consulted in the preparation of this work, the author would acknowledge special indebtedness to—

HISTORY OF COLUMBUS, Washington Irving.

HOUSES AND HOME-LIFE OF THE AMERICAN ABORIGINES,  
L. H. Morgan (Government Printing-Office, Washington, D. C.,

1881); also an article by the same writer in JOHNSON'S CYCLOPEDIA, entitled "Architecture of American Indians."

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ORIGIN OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE, Rev. James F. Riggs, Mexico.

MEXICO, by Brantz Mayer.

HISTORY OF MEXICO, H. H. Bancroft.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE MEXICAN WAR, William Jay.

MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES, Gorham D. Abbott, D.D., LL.D.

TWENTY YEARS AMONG THE MEXICANS, by Miss Melinda Rankin (1875).

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# ABOUT MEXICO.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *A HIDDEN CONTINENT.*

UNTIL Christopher Columbus, by his voyage across the Atlantic, had proved that the world is round, no one in Europe thought of going westward to reach India. Merchants and travelers took the old caravan-routes through Syria and the Valley of the Euphrates, or crossed Egypt and went by the Red Sea. Every path to the land of gold led men eastward. Marco Polo, a Venetian traveler of the thirteenth century, journeyed by these old paths so far east that he stood on the pine-clad hills of Xipangu (Japan) and looked out on the broad Pacific Ocean. He supposed that this was one of those great flat seas by which the flat world was encircled, and that if a vessel ventured too far upon it contrary winds might blow such unwary sailors over the edge of the world. Columbus, who was a student as well as a sailor, read the adventures of Marco Polo and other travelers, and came to quite a different conclusion. If the world is round, as he believed, the water which Marco Polo saw stretching far to the east was the same ocean as that which washed the western shores of Europe. Japan and India could be reached

by a vessel from Europe steered due west across the Atlantic Ocean.

For eighteen long years Columbus talked and dreamed of this voyage. At last, in the year 1492, after many disheartening delays, he sailed from the harbor of Palos, in Spain, with a little fleet of vessels provided by his sovereigns, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, king and queen of the united Spains. It was on this voyage to India that Columbus discovered the little island of Guana-hanè, one of the Bahamas, named by him "San Salvador." He supposed it to be one of the outlying islands of Asia, and that by pushing on still farther toward the west he would soon reach that continent. His great desire was to open up to his countrymen a new path to the Spice Islands, the pearl-fisheries and the mines of gold, silver and precious stones of which they so fondly dreamed, and, better still—for Columbus was an earnest Christian—to tell the story of the cross to its heathen people. He hoped also to build up a new empire for Spain and to become its viceroy, with power to transmit the office to his posterity. He returned to Spain with the news of his discovery, but went back once and again to pursue his search for India, expecting to find some gate through these western islands to that country. How strong was his hope is shown by the fact that on his third and last voyage he took with him Arabic interpreters, so that when he met any Mohammedians—at that time the rulers of India—he would be able to hold conversations with them in a language understood by all followers of Mohammed.

We can scarcely imagine the ignorance of those times. In 1502, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, a Spanish explorer, climbed to the top of the mountains on the Isthmus of

Darien and looked off over the vast expanse of water toward the west, never realizing that he had discovered a new ocean or that the peak on which he stood formed part of the backbone of a new world. For many years after the western shore of the Atlantic was discovered all who landed upon it supposed they were in some part of Asia. They called those countries "the West Indies," and the people of both North and South America "Indians."

In 1502, Columbus was earnestly examining the coast of Central America, hoping to find some passage like the Straits of Gibraltar which would prove to be the long-looked-for gateway to the land of gold. Indeed, so eager was he in this vain pursuit that he lost sight of everything else.

It was during this voyage that Europeans obtained their first glimpse of Mexican wealth and civilization. One party from the little squadron had landed on an island near Cape Honduras to obtain a supply of fresh water. While on the beach they saw a canoe of unusual size making its way toward the point on which they stood. Its passengers and crew made a large company; they seemed to be strangers, and to have come from a long distance. Fernando Columbus, who was with his father at the time, describes the boat as "eight feet wide and as long as a galley, though formed of the trunk of a single tree and shaped like those common in the islands. In the middle of the canoe there was an awning made of palm-leaves, not unlike those of the Venetian gondolas, which formed so close a covering as to protect whatever it contained against the rain and waves. Under this awning were women and children, goods and merchandise. The canoe was rowed by twenty-five men."

The admiral gave thanks to God for having afforded him samples of the commodities of those countries without exposing his men to toil or danger. He ordered such things to be taken as seemed most valuable, amongst which were cotton coverlets and tunics without sleeves, curiously worked and dyed with various colors; coverings for the loins, of similar material; large mantles, in which the female Indians wrapped themselves like the Moorish women of Granada; long wooden swords with channels on each side of the blade, edged with sharp flints that cut the naked body as well as steel; copper hatchets for cutting wood, bells of the same metal, and crucibles in which to melt the metal. For provisions they had roots and grains, a sort of wine made of maize, resembling English beer, and great quantities of almonds\* of the kind used by the people of New Spain for money.

The Spaniards were very much struck by the modest bearing of these new comers, and considered them superior to any natives they had yet seen. Columbus ordered their canoe to be restored to them, with European goods in exchange for those he had taken. He then let them all go except one old man who was more intelligent than the rest, and who seemed to be their chief—or cacique, as such a person is called in Spanish histories of the New World. This cacique could understand the language spoken in Honduras, and through his interpreters from that country Columbus heard about the old man's home at the west.

The historian adds: "Although the admiral had heard so much from the Indians concerning the wealth, politeness and ingenuity of these people, yet, considering that

\* Cacao-beans, of which chocolate is made.

these countries lay to leeward, and he could sail thither from Cuba whenever he might think fit, he determined to leave them for another occasion, and persisted in his design of endeavoring to discover the strait across the continent, that he might open the navigation of the South Sea, in order to arrive at the spice countries."

How absorbed Columbus was we may know when we read the whole story of this neglected opportunity; for such it proved to be. The natives of Honduras had pictured Mexico as rich and populous beyond all comparison. They dazzled the Spaniards with stories of people who could afford to wear as their ordinary apparel crowns and bracelets and anklets of gold, with garments heavy with golden embroidery; of others, who had chairs and tables inlaid with gold, and who ate and drank out of vessels of the same precious metal. They professed to be familiar with Indian coral and the spices which had made the trade with India so valuable to Spain. Everything in their own land of which the Spaniards boasted these Indians claimed would be found in that wonderful country toward the setting sun. Even the ships and cannon and horses with which they had been at first so astonished actually figured in some of these fancy-sketches of Mexico.

But, though Columbus was convinced that he was in the neighborhood of a rich and civilized people, he had no time to stop by the way until he had fulfilled his great commission from Heaven to enrich the Church from the treasures of India, and to set up the standard of Christ among its heathen people. He supposed that he was near one of the provinces of Tartary and that he would soon reach the Ganges, and he was fired with a holy ambition to be the first son of the Church who



should tell the story of redemption on the banks of this sacred river of the Hindus. He did not dream that between him and the object of his search two continents stretched their vast length almost from one polar circle to another, and that behind them rolled the widest ocean in the world.

It was with this great purpose in view that Columbus resolutely turned away from this half-opened door to Mexico and left the discovery and conquest of that country to a man who had the same idea of going westward to India, and the same desire to bring the heathen into the fold of the Church, but who had time to turn aside to take possession of all the gold-mines that opened along his way.

We need not turn our back on Mexico because Columbus did. Let us lift the veil by which it was so long hidden from the European world and look at this beautiful land as it appeared

#### BEFORE THE CONQUEST.

Mexico, which occupies the tapering southern end of North America, was then held by various tribes, the chief of which were called "Aztecs." Yucatan, which had recently been brought under tribute by these warlike people, was the southern limit of their conquest. Their other boundaries are unknown save that with different kindred tribes they occupied all of what is now known as Mexico.

For grandeur of scenery and variety of climate and productions this country is unsurpassed by any other on the globe. The great mountain-chain which runs along the Pacific shore of both continents widens out in this region into lofty table-lands. One of these, called





POPOCATAPETL ("THE HILL THAT SMOKES").

the "Valley of Mexico," is nearly one thousand square miles in extent and from five thousand to eight thousand feet above the level of the sea. Three hundred years ago one-tenth part of this plateau was covered with lakes, both salt and fresh. These have dwindled in size since those early days, probably because the surrounding hills have been stripped by the invaders almost bare of the luxuriant forests which once covered them. Lofty hills form a rampart on three sides of this table-land. On the north it opens out on a great natural road leading along the level mountain-tops for a distance of twelve hundred miles. It was probably along this great highway that many of the early settlers of Mexico came from their homes at the North.

Rising out of this vast mountain-mass are snow-capped peaks, one of which—the highest land on our continent—is a mile and a half higher than the lofty platform on which it stands. Along the nineteenth parallel of latitude rise five volcanoes. Two of these overlooked the Aztec capital and bore the Indian names they still hold. Popocatepetl—"the hill that smokes"—has been doing its best to deserve that title ever since it received it; Iztaccihuatl—"the woman in white"—is so called from its fancied resemblance to the form of a woman lying with her face upturned to the sky, a snowy robe folded across her breast.

Descending on each side from this rocky platform to the sea, the traveler passes over three great natural terraces, each of which has a different climate and productions differing with the elevation. In the Aztec country, which lay entirely within the tropics, the whole scale of vegetation could be found. Forests of evergreen oaks and pine flourished on the mountains, below the snow-

line, with wheat and other northern cereals. Below these, in richer variety, were the flowers and fruits of the temperate zone. Maize, which is found everywhere in Mexico, attains its most luxuriant growth in this milder climate. The cactus family grows in almost endless forms, the maguey with its rich yellow clusters of flowers, and other trees and plants native to this soil.



PLANTATION OF MAGUEY (*Agave Americana*).

The mountains are often cleft by deep ravines in which Nature revels in moisture and warmth and brings out her richest vegetable treasures. Magnificent trees rooted far below lift their heads into the sunshine, and flowering vines clamber everywhere in a wilderness of beauty and fragrance. Gay butterflies glance in the sunlight like blossoms on the wing. Air and earth are alive with myriad insects, while birds as rich in flashing plumage as any gem in all the mines of Mexico enliven the woods with songs unheard in other tropical countries. Some

of the most beautiful garden-flowers came from this land. They were first carried to Europe by visitors to Mexico, and thence, after being domesticated in the old gardens of Spain and France, they have found their way back to their native continent as emigrants from the Old World. All the dahlias can trace lineage to some gay beauties that once grew on these mountain-top meadows of Mexico. It was years before they could be civilized enough to dress in double sets of petals, and the gardeners of this day have only to let them alone for a while, and they go back to their wild Mexican singleness.

It is in the low lands along the sea that we find the luxuriance and variety of tropical vegetation. "Even the sand-dunes," says a recent writer, "blaze in color, lupines in high waving masses of white, yellow and blue, great mats of glittering ice-plants with myriads of rose-colored umbels, lying flat on the white sand, while all the air is sweet with fragrance."

Here were multitudes of plants which are at home only in Mexico. Among them was the cacao, from which the natives prepared their delicious chocolate, and whose seeds passed from hand to hand instead of coin. The vanilla, which grew only on the seashore, was used then as now for flavoring. The cochineal was also raised on the coast; it was the insect which fed on the leaves of a cactus-plant. From the dried body of the female was procured a brilliant red color much used by the Aztecs in dyeing their cotton cloth.

Next to the bamboo, there is probably no plant which can be used in so many ways as the Mexican agave, or maguey. Of its bruised leaves were made broad sheets of paper, on which the most of Mexican history was



written. Prepared in another way, these leaves thatched the poor man's cottage. Its thorns served for pins and needles; its delicate fibres, for thread; and those which were heavier were twisted into cords or ropes. From its roots a palatable and nutritious food was prepared, while its juices, when fermented, made an intoxicating liquor on which the old Aztecs were accustomed to get drunk.

On the coasts there were also forests of mahogany, Brazil-wood, iron-wood, ebony, Campeachy-wood, with numberless varieties of the palm tree. These forests swarmed with small animals, such as tapirs, porcupines, ant-eaters, sloths, monkeys and armadillos, with alligators in the streams. Scorpions, centipedes and other venomous creatures abounded everywhere. The silk-worm also is indigenous to many parts of the country.

Mexico has few rivers of great length, and these are navigable only where they cross the narrow belt of low-land to reach the sea.

The mineral wealth of Mexico exceeded that of any other land, not excepting Peru, so famed for its precious metals. Gold was once the staple production of the country, as silver is now. It was found in placers, and was more easily worked than silver. With all that natives and foreigners have taken out of the earth, it is supposed that many valuable mines remain to be discovered. Of iron the natives knew nothing, though mountains of solid ore were found when the Spaniards opened this great mineral storehouse. Tin is abundant in Michoacan and Jalisco. Copper is very common, and lead is found in almost every silver-mine. In Oajaca are found amethysts, agates, turquoises and carnelians.

The beautiful marbles of Mexico have been used for

building purposes from time immemorial. The natives employed porphyry and jasper in decoration. Various kinds of greenstone resembling emeralds were found, and were in great demand for ornaments. Amber came from Yucatan, and pearls from California. The salt-lakes of the table-land yielded abundance of that precious commodity, which formed a chief article of commerce between the people of that region and less favored tribes.



## CHAPTER II.

### *EARLY SETTLERS OF MEXICO.*

**A**MONG the pictures carved on the ancient monuments in Mexico are those which represent Votan, whose history belongs to the earliest dawn of civilization in this Western world. He and his companions are said to have come from a foreign land in ships. They found the people, from the Isthmus to California, clothed in skins, dwelling in caves or rude huts and speaking one language. There are evidences that Votan brought with him to this continent a knowledge of the one true God, which he taught to the people. As we are further told in these traditions that no temples or altars were known in Votan's day, he must have lived before the Mexican pyramids were built, since these all seem to be designed for places of worship.

Votan and his friends married the women of the country, and after establishing a government they made several voyages to their native land. On his return from one of these trips Votan reported that he had been to see the ruins of a building erected by men who intended to climb up on it to heaven, and that the people who lived in its neighborhood said that it was the place where God gave to each family its own language.

Who were these aboriginal inhabitants of America whom Votan taught, and when was it that they emerged from their caves and huts to gaze on these first white

men who came to this continent? At some time in their history they no doubt migrated from Central Asia, that cradle of the human race. As to when or by what road they found their way to America we cannot be so sure. A glance at the map of the world will show that away up among the icebergs of the polar circle the north-western corner of America comes so near the north-eastern corner of Asia that their outlying islands seem like stepping-stones from one continent to the other. The Alaskan Indians, on our side, and their neighbors in Siberia, now find no difficulty in crossing Behring's Straits in their little kyacks, and it is more than probable that in the far-away past of which Mexican records tell, some of the wandering tribes of the Old World found their way to this continent by this northern road.

We hear now of small colonies of Japanese on our western coast who have come over by still another route, which can be seen on maps that give the direction of the ocean-currents. One of these great sea-rivers runs north through the Pacific Ocean quite near the eastern shore of Asia until it is opposite Japan; then, turning suddenly, it sweeps due east until it strikes the coast of California. The people of Asia occasionally drift over to America on this ocean-current. Uprooted trees of kinds which do not grow on this continent are found on the shore, and Japanese junks are stranded at the rate of about one every year, and sometimes, it is said, with some of their shipwrecked crew still alive.

It is probable that other civilized people succeeded Votan in the possession of Mexico, but until some time in the tenth century no one of them was described. At that period a new nation made its appearance among

the shadowy races with which the land was peopled. Tradition says they were white men who came from the north-east in companies, some by sea and some by land ; twenty thousand of these emigrants, led by a dignified old chief, are said to have come at once. They are described as a good-looking people, wearing long white tunics, sandals and straw hats. They were mostly farmers and skilled mechanics, and were peaceable, orderly and enterprising. They had left their own land, Huchue-Tlapallan, after a struggle of years with the barbarous tribes around them, and made their way south to Mexico—a country with which it is probable they had been familiar as traders. Many suppose that these immigrants were the same people as the Mound-Builders of our own country—that strange, nameless race whose earthworks astonish the archæologist of to-day. Tools which these old workmen left behind them in the Ohio Valley and elsewhere are made of a kind of flint which is not found nearer than Mexico. Shells which must have come from the Gulf of Mexico have also been found buried in the graves of the Mound-Builders, showing that ages ago these people must have trafficked with those who lived along its shores. When war disturbed them in their home at the North, the more enterprising of them migrated to Mexico and built cities and temples on the same general plan as those erected by their forefathers, but of so much more substantial materials that many of them have outlasted the centuries which have come and gone since they appeared among the southern tribes. These people went by the name of “Toltecs” among their Mexican neighbors and successors. When the later tribes came to have a written history—as they did about four hundred years afterward—they ascribed

all that they knew of civilization to those who preceded them.

The Toltecs filled the land with colossal masonry. Many of the temples, pyramids, castles and aqueducts which were in decay when Cortez arrived, in 1519, are supposed to have been built by these people. The half-buried ruins of Tula, or Tullan, one of their great cities, may still have been inhabited at the time of the conquest, but most of the places known to have been built by them were numbered among the antiquities of Mexico when Columbus was near that land, more than twenty years before.

In Xochimilco is found a great pyramid with five terraces, built on a platform of solid rock. This rock has been hollowed out, and long galleries with smooth, glistening sides formed within it. The great pyramid of Cholula, built by the early race, covered forty-five acres of ground and was fourteen hundred feet square at the base. A winding road led to its top, which was flat, with small towers for worship. All these structures were built with their sides squared by the points of the compass. They are now found buried in the depths of vast forests, far away from the haunts of civilized men. As the Indians always seem unwilling to reveal the secret of their existence, many of these are no doubt yet unknown to the white race.

The temple of Papantla, fifty miles from Vera Cruz, was hidden in the dense woods west of that city for more than two hundred years after the Spaniards landed on the coast, having been discovered by a party of hunters in 1790. This building is so old that those who could decipher the picture-language of the Aztecs could not interpret the inscriptions on its terraced sides, though



ANCIENT TOLTEC PALACE AT TULA (OR TULAN), MEXICO.



when found the characters were almost as fresh as when the ancient sculptors laid down their tools. It is built of immense blocks of porphyry put together with mortar. A stairway of fifty-seven steps leads to the top, which is sixty feet square. The stone facing of the sides is covered with hieroglyphics of serpents, crocodiles, and other emblems which remind one of the monuments of ancient Egypt. Some, indeed, have supposed that the builders of the old Mexican pyramids belonged to the same family of nations, and have even gone so far as to say that some of the work they left is as old as that of Egypt. Humboldt, who visited some of these ruins, traced their resemblance not only to Egyptian but to Assyrian architecture, and says of their decaying palaces, "They equaled those of ancient Greece and Rome in ornamentation."

About four hundred years passed away, and the Toltecs disappeared from Mexico; war, pestilence and famine did their work among these interesting people. They left accounts of their nation and polity in carefully written or pictured histories, some of which were extant when Cortez came; none of them can now be found. One of the early Aztec chieftains made a bonfire of some of these books, and the Spaniards, in their fanatical zeal to blot out all traces of heathenism, destroyed libraries of these and other valuable records which would now be worth more to the world than all the monkish legends that ever were written.

But there was much that could not be blotted out. The Aztec measurement of time—more perfect than any known to the Greeks and the Romans—was taught to them by these old astrologers, who seem to have known the precise length of the tropical year. The ingenious



system of picture-writing in use among all the tribes, the more enlightened of their laws and the most refined and humane part of their worship were a legacy from their Toltec predecessors.

Very strong light is often thrown on the past by the history of a single word ; the name "Toltec" is an instance of this. While many other Mexicans were yet wandering tribes these people came to the valley and began to build the large edifices for which they have since become famous, and to carve the symbols of their faith on the solid rocks about them. Their rude neighbors looked on with wonder. They had no word of their own to express the new and strange character of a builder ; and when they had need to speak of such a man, they called him a Toltec.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE VALLEY REPEOPLED.

AMONG those who became masters of the great table-land of Anahuac\* after the disappearance of the Toltecs were several kindred tribes called Nahuas, or "skilled ones," who claimed to have entered Mexico at different times from some place at the North. Their civilization, which made them differ from those tribes that lived by the chase, was shown by their giving up their wandering life and settling down, one after another, as neighbors around Tezeuco, the largest lake on the table-land of Mexico. Thus they became what is known as sedentary, or pueblo ("village"), Indians. These people, like other North American tribes, have straight black hair, with a fondness for paint, feathers and gew-gaws. Their *nahuatl*—the word for language—meant "pleasant sound." This varied as much then among different tribes as is now the case in Mexico, where the people of one Indian village (especially the women) speak a language which those in another—not ten miles distant, perhaps—cannot understand, although they have been neighbors for a century.

Like all Indian languages, Aztec proper names had a meaning and were easily written in rude signs or pictures. Thus the name of the great chief Nezacoyatl, or "Hungry Fox," was expressed by a picture of a fox,

\* Meaning "near the water."

and its image, carved in stone, in his lordly pleasure-grounds on the shore of Lake Tezcuco, gave the title and the history of the owner.

By giving our readers the English signification of these names they will have some advantages possessed by old Mexican readers, who, it is likely, would have stumbled as often as we do over the spelling, if not over the pronunciation, of these words. Thus, for instance, Quetzalcohuatl (*ketzalcowattle*), a hero-saint who figures in Mexican history, shall be "Feathered Serpent," and, instead of Huitzilapochtli—that frightful name for their still more frightful war-god—we will say "Humming-Bird," which is the decidedly mild interpretation thereof.

The Aztec tribe with which our story has most to do were among the latest arrivals on the great table-lands of Mexico. A curious map of their migrations before they came there was still in existence when the Europeans overran the country. It was so different from the maps in use in Spain that the Spanish soldiers who captured it supposed it was an Aztec embroidery-pattern, and sent it as such to the old country. They also had a history of the tribe in picture-writing. This declares that Mexico was peopled by men who came out of a cave and afterward traveled all over the country on the backs of turtles. Aztlan, the home of the Aztecs, was written with *atl*, a waved line (~~~~~)—their picture-sign for water—put beside one of a pyramidal temple and a palm tree. We may know by the latter picture that Aztlan was not very far to the north.

The Aztecs were a band of fierce savages who took refuge in the swamps near the site of the present City of Mexico after a migratory life elsewhere. It is quite possible to fix the date of this last remove by records kept

by their more intelligent neighbors. A few of the Toltecs no doubt remained in the valley, and they had taught the Alcohuan—a tribe which preceded the Aztecs—who afterward became the most cultured people in Mexico. Their calculations were thus exact enough to guide us in ours, so that we know that the Aztecs entered the Valley of Mexico early in the fourteenth century. Their records also show that at that time the Aztecs were composed of seven related families, or clans, each one of which formed a little community guided by its own chief, and all bearing the same surname. In other words, there were only seven surnames in the whole tribe.

From the outset these new comers were considered intruders, and were obliged to content themselves with a precarious footing on the neutral ground by which, in Indian fashion, the settlements of their neighbors were surrounded. They lived on fish, birds and such water-plants as grew in the swamp, as well as by predatory raids on the peaceful farmers around them. While they were still in this unsettled state the oracle of the tribe is reported to have spoken for Humming-Bird, their war-god, in this wise:

“I was sent on this journey, and my office it is to carry arms, bows, arrows and shields. War is my chief duty and the object of my coming. I have to look out in all directions, and with my body, head and arms have to do my duty in many tribes, being on the borders and lying in wait for many nations to maintain and gather them, though not graciously.”

We can picture in imagination the wily old medicine-man who made this speech, and thus fixed the policy of the tribe on a distinctively war-basis.

In 1325, as we learn from their old records, a great change took place in the condition of the Aztecs. Some of the tribe saw on a reedy island on the lake a splendid eagle perched on one of the cactus-plants with which the region abounds. His wings were outstretched toward the rising sun, and he held a writhing serpent in his beak. The old oracle of the tribe was consulted again. He decided that this was a token that the gods were smiling on the Aztecs and wished to point out this place as a site on which they ought to build a city. This was begun by sinking piles in the water. On these they first built little thatched cabins, with walls woven out of the reeds they found growing on the lake-shore, and plastered with mud. They called the place Tenochtitlan (or "Stone-cactus City"), either because of this circumstance or because one of their leading chiefs was called Tenoch ("Stone Cactus"). The Aztec capital—for such it became—was afterward named Mexico, after Mexitli, one of their gods.

Year after year, as the tribe pushed out and increased in numbers and wealth, the islands on which they lived were linked together and to the mainland by strong causeways of stone. The place Mexitli became impregnable to Indian warfare. They continued by means of their long dykes not only to join the island to the mainland, but so to pen up the waters flowing into the lake as to surround the city with deep water, and thus defend it in case of a siege. At intervals sluices were cut through the causeways, over which openings bridges were thrown that could be taken up in time of war.

It is probable that for many years the tribe owned no other land than that on which their city stood. It was divided into four quarters, or *calpulli*, each having its own chief and temple, council-house, and other public



buildings. These *calpulli* were afterward further subdivided into communities, each living in houses large enough to contain a small army. The rush huts in time gave place to more substantial edifices, many of which were elegant in design and finish. In Montezuma's day a quarry of soft blood-red stone almost as porous as a sponge was discovered in the mountains near by, and many of the houses in the city were rebuilt of this with fine effect.

The city was regularly laid out, with wide, straight, clean streets radiating from the central *teocallis*, or house of the gods (a plan which was followed throughout Mexico), and numerous and beautiful squares. One of these, the principal market-place of the city, was surrounded by splendid corridors so smoothly paved that they were as slippery as ice. Like Venice, the city was veined with canals, along which the produce of the country was borne in numberless boats into its very centre.

A massive stone aqueduct brought an abundance of pure water from a large spring at Chapultepec, a few miles distant. Immense reservoirs cut out of solid rock, with steps leading down to the level of the water, still remain to show the substantial character of Aztec masonry and enterprise. Where the branch streams of this aqueduct crossed the canals they were widened and left open on top, so that the carriers who served out water to families could bring their canoes directly under these bridge-like reservoirs to be filled, the water being dipped out for them by a man stationed above.

The houses of the better class in Mexico were built of stone and were seldom over two stories in height; they covered a great deal of ground, having large courtyards in the centre. The roofs were flat and terraced, the walls



well whitened and polished, and the floors made of the smoothest plaster and neatly matted. All the walls were very thick and strong, the ceilings being high and generally of wood. Doors were almost unknown and chimneys unheard of.

The houses were usually kept very neatly. Walls were hung with cotton drapery in bright colors and curious feather-work. The beds were often curtained and quite comfortable. Though chairs and tables were not found even in the so-called palace of Montezuma, there were low seats which were easy as well as elegant. The house occupied by Montezuma's clan was very luxurious in its appointments. Its garden was surrounded by balconies supported by marble columns and floored with jasper elegantly inlaid. In the grounds were ten large pools, in which all the different species of water-birds found in Mexico disported themselves. Sea-birds had tanks of salt water. All were kept pure and sweet, filled by pipes leading from the lake or the aqueduct. Three hundred men were constantly employed to take care of these creatures, and a bird-doctor attended to such as were sick. About these tanks there were pleasant corridors, where Montezuma and his brother-chiefs often walked to observe the curious habits of these feathered captives.

Spanish writers speak also of a great collection of albinos, another of dwarfs and giants and deformed people, some of whom had been made such to provide curiosities for the State museum.

Besides the large collection of water-birds, there was another one of such as were found in fields and woods. A menagerie of wild beasts had been gathered from every country known to the Mexicans.

The official residence of the chiefs of Tezcuco had three hundred rooms; some of the terraces on which it stood are still entire and covered with hard cement. Its richly-sculptured stones form an inexhaustible quarry for the house-builders of this age. The neighboring hill, where once was a summer retreat for these luxurious rulers, still shows the stone stairways and terraces which adorned the place. The city was quite embowered in trees and beautified with many parks and gardens. In fact, the botanical garden found at the time of the Spanish conquest was a model afterward copied in various parts of Europe.

Our faith in the glowing descriptions given by Spanish authors of Mexican art and civilization before the conquest would not survive their many exaggerated and contradictory stories if we could not turn to the testimony left by the old inhabitants themselves. While the monuments reared by the Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico have been swept away, the temples and the dwellings farther south exist in vast and splendid desolation, proving that from their very beginning these later tribes were familiar with a style of architecture whose "lavish magnificence has never been excelled."

A late traveler speaks of the ruins of Kabah as "ornamented from the very foundation." The cornices running over the doorways would embellish the art of any known era, and "amid a mass of barbarism of rude and uncouth conceptions it stands an offering by American builders worthy the acceptance of a polished people."

The remains of Mitla—one of the holy cities of Southern Mexico—are considered the finest in a country which can furnish ruined cities by the score. These remains are situated in a desert place unsheltered by the dense



RUINS IN YUCATAN.



forests which have overgrown and buried so many others. In the dry air the brilliant red and black of its wonderful frescoes have never faded. Some gifted architect of a forgotten age has adorned both the inner and the outer walls of these buildings with panels of mosaic so exquisitely wrought that "they can only be matched by the monuments of Greece and Rome in their best days." The rooms have vaulted ceilings and are in pairs, unconnected with other apartments, opening out of doors. Some rude artist of a later day has scrawled coarse figures on these walls, showing that the nameless builders of Mitla, like the Aztecs and other tribes, had suffered from invasions. The terraced roofs of many of these buildings are now heaped by Nature's kindly hand with luxuriant vegetation, and we can see where the Aztecs learned to make their beautiful roof-gardens. Sculptures, paintings, tessellated pavements, luxurious baths, fountains and artificial lakes, are all found in mournful decay in the silent depths of many a wilderness.

The cell-like apartments of one of these elegant buildings in Mitla led its observer to suppose that it was a convent and to name it "The House of the Nuns," but in comparing it with other buildings in Northern Mexico, some of which are now inhabited by pueblo Indians, we find that this must have been one of those joint tenement-houses which Columbus noticed in Cuba, and which form one of the strongest proofs that society throughout Spanish America was communistic. They were generally large and calculated to hold a clan or a number of related families. Some were several stories high and had hundreds of rooms; in these a population of from one hundred to three thousand found shelter. In the country these fort-like villages were similar to those



A PUEBLO (COMMUNAL DWELLING) IN NEW MEXICO.—A RUIN RESTORED.



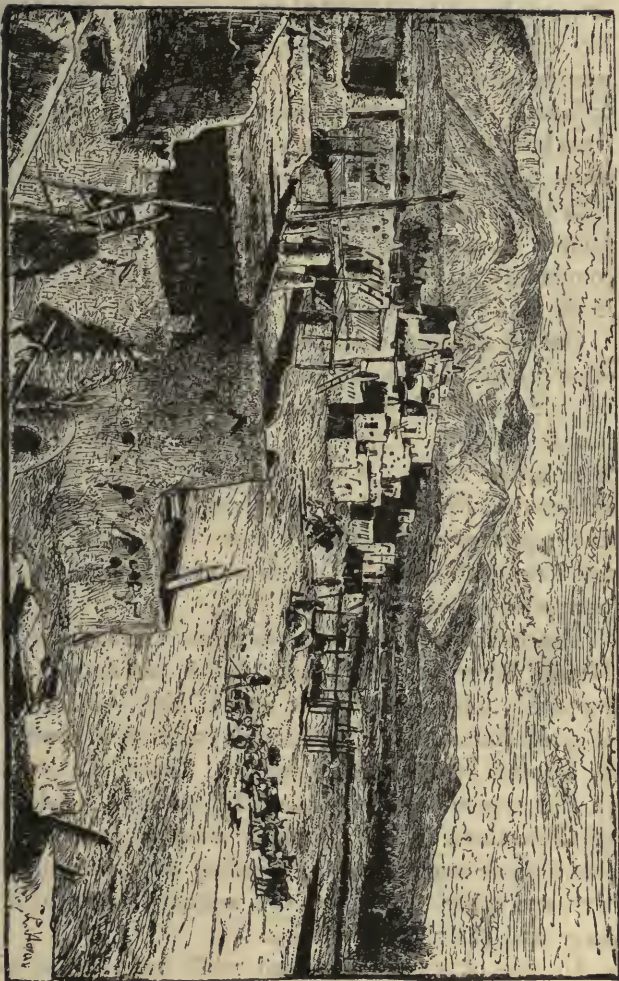
human hives seen to-day in many parts of China where families composed of hundreds of individuals are banded together for mutual protection under one roof, bearing one name. Their communism in living thus finds expression in their houses.

The dwellings of these communities were built on what is called the terraced plan. Imagine a house like a huge staircase, in which each story formed a step ten feet high. The whole interior was made up of numerous small square apartments, often arranged in pairs, having no connection with others, rising tier above tier, without any halls or stairways, each story being wider by one row of rooms than the one above it.

In ruins now existing in New Mexico it is evident that the inmates used ladders and trap-doors in the floor or ceiling when they passed from one story to another.\* Those who came into the house from the outside climbed to the roof of the first story by ladders, never entering, as we do, by doors on the ground-floor. These ladders were drawn up after the inmates were safely housed. The roof of the first story made a shelf on which to plant a ladder for climbing to the roof of the second, unless, as was sometimes the case, all the stories but the first had outside doorways. Each house had one or more rooms set apart as council-chambers for the clan or as places of worship. There must have been many dark rooms in such buildings, but these people lived in stormy times, and their houses were fortresses. The walls, both

\* The captain sent by Mendoza (the first Spanish viceroy) to search for the famous "Seven Cities" speaks of "excellent good houses of three or four lofts high, wherein are good lodgings and fair chambers, with ladders instead of stairs, and certain cellars (*estufas*) underground, very good and paved. The seven cities are seven small towns, all made with this kind of houses."

A TAOS PUEBLO.



inside and outside, were very thick and strong, plastered so carefully with a kind of white cement that they shone like enamel and led the Spaniards to think that these were palaces whose stones were plated with silver. Bright unfading colors were often used in decoration, and bricks were laid in ornamental courses. Ventilation was had by small apertures placed opposite each other and in a line with loopholes in the outer walls. Chimneys were unknown to these ancient masons. The cooking for the community was done by a common fire, or by several fires if the clan was a large one.

Outside the large cities these communal dwellings were often grouped by the side of some stream and surrounded by cultivated fields and orchards, or oftener on some commanding hilltop. This was necessary in case of attack from hostile tribes. A group of these massive buildings surrounded by luxuriant trees must have presented a fine appearance. Some were from five to six hundred feet long, with wings. Towers two or three stories high were often added.

The building known as the Casa Grande, on San Miguel River, has walls eight feet in thickness and is supposed to have been seven stories high, with a front of eight hundred feet. Near this building was another, with rooms built around a square. The whole country in this region (one hundred and fifty miles north-west of Chihuahua) is full of Indian mounds, in which are found stone axes, mills for grinding corn, broken pottery, and other tokens that this was once the home of a large and thriving population.

In case of war the terraced roofs were heaped with missiles and bristled with defenders. When defeated, the survivors fled for refuge to the caves which abounded

in that mountainous country. Holes large enough for a living-room are found to-day dug out of the face of a precipice, and so high that in one case the mortar which was used in walling up the front of the excavation must have been carried up four hundred feet. These retreats were generally in the most inaccessible places, where it would be difficult with all the skill of modern times to build fortifications. Water was sometimes led to these places by a secret pipe ; others were supplied by cisterns. In a cemented tank which was recently found in one of these cave-dwellings at the North the print of a little child's hand is seen as plainly as if the small fingers had touched the soft plaster but yesterday. In some cases immense pine trees have grown up amid these ruins, showing how long ago they were forsaken by human beings.



## CHAPTER IV.

### *LAWS AND LAWGIVERS.*

WHAT we know of the social organization and government of the Aztec and kindred tribes has come down to us mostly through Spanish sources, as, excepting some pictures carved on temple-walls and on monuments, most of their early records were swept away at the time of the conquest. But these foreign writers knew so little of the peculiarities of the people they professed to describe that their accounts are often contradictory. Thus a great empire is spoken of by one writer as ruled by the despot Montezuma. Kings elect him to his high office. He is surrounded by a great retinue of hereditary nobility, and princes from a score of provinces are obliged to attend him as hostages for the good behavior of their people, while a harem of a thousand dark-eyed beauties graces his splendid halls. On the other hand, Cortez informs Charles V. that some of these tribes have a republican form of government. Such, for instance, were the Cholulans, a powerful mercantile tribe about sixty miles from Mexico, and the Tlascalans, a race of bold mountaineers whom Cortez met and conquered on his way to that city. Of Tlascala he says: "It resembles the States of Venice, Genoa and Pisa, since the supreme authority is not reposed in one person. In war all unite and have a voice in its management and



direction." Besides these republics, there were many independent tribes. At the very door of the capital was Tezcuco, whose territory rivaled that of the Aztecs in extent, while its history, as related by Tezeuean writers to their adopted countrymen of Spain, shows a line of monarchs some of whom were claimed to be the intellectual peers of Socrates, David and Solomon. While the Tezeucans took precedence of the Aztecs with regard to culture, the Zapotees of the South defied them as warriors. We learn from Cortez that no Aztec ever dared to set foot on their territory.

There is nothing stranger in the history of the Aztecs than the quiet behavior of the people when their so-called emperor was taken captive. During a morning call at his palace he is arrested by Cortez, and after a brief explanation is carried in his litter through the streets by his weeping nobles to the quarters of an armed band of foreigners and left there a prisoner, to guide the affairs of his realm by their permission and under their direction. Nothing explains the inconsistencies of this relation or dispels the mystery which surrounds this Indian potentate until we study the social customs which still prevail among the aborigines of America and examine the deserted homes and temples of the very tribes in question. Such a study clears up many of the mistakes of early historians. We find everywhere evidences of a state of society so widely different from that existing in Europe as to be unintelligible there. Cortez speaks of his host as *Señor Montezuma*—"señor" being a title applied to an ordinary Spanish gentleman—while in the same letter he describes the princes and the lords who formed the court of this Indian ruler. Other writers are more consistent, and,

boldly jumping to the conclusion that this was a great empire with a sovereign like their own, the victories they describe are, of course, greatly magnified. That this was the impression of Mexico gained by the rude Spanish soldiery we know from the fact that when they first saw the beautiful cities of the valley in their glorious setting of mountain and lake they feared to grapple with a people whose civilization in some respects outshone their own, and but for the dauntless courage and ambition of Cortez they would have turned back on the very threshold without their coveted prize. Two descendants of Tezcucan chiefs, who afterward described their country for the benefit of European readers, give their history the same coloring, claiming the rank of emperors for their ancestors. Further research has shown that all these were fanciful theories, and that not only in Cholula and Tlascala, but throughout Mexico, the republican form of government prevailed.

When the Aztecs came into the valley, they were a group of seven distinct but related families, all speaking one language and worshipping the same gods. The strange, hard syllables of their seven surnames were perpetuated among them until some time near the close of the seventeenth century—almost a hundred years after the Spanish conquest. These families held their lands in common, as all American Indians do, and it is probable that long before they forsook their huts in the swamp for substantial stone houses they lived together on the communal plan. In Stephens's *Travels in Yucatan* we have a glimpse of Indian village-life as it existed then. The author says: "The food is prepared at one hut, and every family sends for its portion; which explains a singular spectacle we had seen on our arrival—a pro-

cession of women and children, each carrying an earthen bowl containing a quantity of smoking-hot broth, all coming down the same road and dispersing among the different huts. This custom has existed for an unknown length of time."

Like their neighbors, these Aztecs held as their own an undefined territory over which they might extend their city as they chose. As we have seen, the ground on which Mexico stood was nearly all reclaimed from the salt marshes of Lake Tezcuco. It had about it a fringe of floating gardens which in part supplied the city markets, although with the increase of population a still larger supply was drawn from the fields and the orchards of tribes they had forced to pay tribute.

The city had four *calpulli*, or wards, each of which was governed by its own chief and had its own temple and public buildings. These wards were further subdivided as the tribe increased in numbers. Not only was each ward sovereign in its own territory, but each of its subdivisions was an independent organization so far as its local interests were concerned.

The business of the tribe was transacted in the central council-house—*teepan*, or house of the community. This building fronted the great open square in the heart of the city and had a tower for defence and lookout. It is reasonable to suppose that it was this large building which was described by Spanish historians as Montezuma's palace. As the dwelling of the rich and powerful clan to which the chief-of-men belonged, the tribal council was probably held within its chambers, that being the custom through all the subdivisions of the tribe.

While the settlement on the lake was still new one of

these original Aztec clans, or kins, seceded in some family quarrel and proceeded to set up for itself on the mainland. In 1473 these divided clans had a fierce struggle on the battlefield; the Aztecs were finally left masters. In punishment for their offence against the tribe, the Tlatilucos, as the seceders were called, were degraded by the tribal council to the rank of women; no male Indian could fall lower than that. Their young men were denied the rank of warriors and became mere burden-bearers for their victorious brethren. In the peace which followed, the vanquished men were set to work on the great *teocallis* which the Aztecs were then building. After years of alienation the Tlatilucos were conditionally restored to their former rank and allowed their birthright as warriors, but the two parties never ceased to be bitter enemies. The old hatred was only smothered, and broke out afresh in the time of the Spanish invasion, when an opportunity was taken to pay off old scores, with interest, and those who had been seceders were in league with the enemies of the Aztecs.

Among the tribes which had settled in the valley before the Aztecs built their island-city were the Alcohuans, afterward called Tezcucans, after their city, Tezcuco. They were a more humane and cultivated people than the Aztecs, upon whom, from the first, they seem to have looked down as an inferior race. As they advanced in wealth and civilization they extended their conquests toward the north.

About one hundred years before the Europeans made their appearance in the valley, the Tezcucans—who were on the losing side in a conflict with their neighbors, the Tepanacs, who appear at that time to have been masters of the table-land—entered into a league with the Aztecs



and Tlacopans. In gratitude for the valuable assistance rendered by the former tribe at a time when their nation was nearly crushed, the Tezcucans gave their once-despised neighbors the tribute they levied on the conquered Tepanacs, and henceforth the Aztecs were masters of the valley. The three allied tribes agreed to stand by each other under all circumstances. In any war in which all united the spoil was divided according to terms agreed upon among themselves, Tezcuco and Mexico, as the largest tribes, taking the lion's share. Each of the confederate powers was absolute in its own territory, and might carry on war and levy tribute for itself. These tribes lived in friendship for about one hundred years, when, as might have been expected, they fell out over their plunder. By this time the Aztecs had succeeded in bringing an immense territory under tribute, carrying their banners in triumph from the Atlantic to the Pacific and as far south as Guatemala and Yucatan. The whole government of their nation was organized on a strictly war-basis, with a general at its head.

The commander-in-chief of the Aztecs was elected for life or during good behavior. The office was not in any sense hereditary, although Montezuma, the chief in power at the time of the Spanish conquest, was the nephew of his predecessor, "the bold and bloody Ahuitzotl." The old warriors of the tribe, the head-chiefs of the confederate tribes and the leading priests were the electors of this officer. These electors constituted a tribal council, which was the fountain of all power, religious and civil. They not only elected the chief and deposed him if he displeased the tribe, but after his inauguration they decided all questions in peace or in war. The chief seems to have been an executive of their decrees, which, like those



of old Venice, were despotic, and often cruel. The man chosen by this council bore the title of "chief-of-men" (*tlaca-tecuhtli*).

Among the Aztecs the chief had an associate in office whose business it was to look after the revenues of the tribe. This man had the strange title of "snake-woman" (*cohua-cohuatl*), meaning, probably, a mate. From their first appearance in history these warlike people had subsisted on the plunder taken from other tribes, so that whoever had the care of the revenues from this source had the life of the nation in his hands. This associate chief went through the same ceremonies at the time of his inauguration, and wore the same dress, as the "chief-of-men," and in time of emergency he was expected to head the army.

Tlascala had four chiefs, who acted in concert; the Zapotecs had a high priest or divine ruler, and the Tezcucans also had but one.

It is a fact established by one of the oldest sculptures in Mexico that the custom of double headship was common there from the earliest times. A nameless artist has given us on the walls of Palenque a picture representing the two chiefs in their official regalia—the very dress which Montezuma wore, as described by Spanish writers.

Among the qualifications which were required in the chief-of-men were gravity and dignity of manner, fluency of speech and bravery in war. The prolonged ordeal through which each candidate for ordinary chieftainship was called to pass was a test of his character and of his fitness for office which none but those possessed of every Indian virtue could endure, and any one selected from among those thus distinguished could scarcely fail to be worthy of public trust. The candidate was obliged to

pass through four days and nights of torment. He ate but little, and that of the poorest food; he was surrounded every hour by a crowd who subjected him to every possible indignity; he was jeered at, taunted and scourged until he was bleeding and exhausted. This over, he spent a year in close retirement and abstinence. After another four days and nights of the most rigorous and cruel tests of his patience and his fortitude, he was brought out in triumph to enjoy once more the society of friends and allowed to dress and feast at will. The head-chief wore his hair tied up on the top of his head with a narrow band of leather dyed red.

As badges of their office the "chief-of-men" and his associate wore certain ornaments which it was death for any one else to assume. One of the green stones so much admired in those days was hung from the bridge of the nose; a golden lip-ring was another appendage. Wristbands of exquisite feather-work, armbands and anklets of gold elaborately chased, added to the brilliancy of his attire. Montezuma is described as wearing a large square mantle of richly-embroidered cotton cloth tied about his neck by two of its knotted corners, a broad sash with fringed ends draped about his loins, sandals with golden soles and thongs of embossed leather. His garments were sprinkled with precious stones and pearls, with a long and handsome tuft of green feathers fastened on the top of his head and hanging down his back. At the time of his introduction to Europeans he was about forty years of age, tall, thin, with long, straight black hair and but little beard. He had a paler color than most of his race, and a serious, if not a melancholy, expression. If half that we read of Montezuma's epicurean tastes and inactive habits is true, it is reasonable to suppose that he was a

confirmed dyspeptic, which may in part account for his gloomy views of life at this time.

The Mexicans seem to have had no written laws. It is said that in early times their laws were so few that everybody knew them by heart. In later days a record was kept of suits in law, and the decisions given in these cases served as precedents. Thus was established a common-law founded on long usage. The despotic decrees of the council were often given after consulting the priests, who were the oracles of the tribe. When the gods had decided, there was no appeal. A number of such cases occurred in the troublous times when the Aztecs were at war with the Spaniards. It is said that all the wisdom of the great Hungry Fox could not avail in a controversy with these priests. The chief loathed the worship of Humming-Bird and sought to bring his people back to the altars of the Toltecs. But in vain. The oracles declared that all the troubles in which the tribe were then plunged were due to the neglect of human sacrifices, and it was decided that henceforth the cruel war-god should have his fill of them.

The punishment of crime was most severe. Every petty theft was punished by the temporary enslavement of the culprit to the person he had wronged, or by death. Stealing a tobacco-pouch or twenty ears of corn or pilfering in the market-place was thus atoned for. In the latter case the thief was clubbed to death on the spot. Any one who was guilty of stealing gold offended Xipe, the patron god of those who worked in the precious metals; he was therefore doomed to be skinned alive before the altar of this deity. The effect of these severe laws against robbery was everywhere seen in treasures being left unguarded. A man who died drunk was dressed for



MEXICAN INDIAN MAT-MAKERS (MODERN).



burial in the robes worn by the goddess of strong drink, his patron saint. Drunkenness in young people, since it unfitted them for public duty, was punishable with death, though the same fault was winked at in an older person. Slanderers fared somewhat better, and escaped with singed hair. Any member of the *calpulli* who failed to till the little portion of the public land assigned to him became an outcast, and was condemned to menial service. If he failed to till the lands of any minor for whom he was guardian, his breach of trust was punished with death.

True slavery, in our sense of that word, was unknown among these people. As outcasts they forfeited their tribal privileges, but could be readopted by their brethren after some meritorious act.

It was a capital offence to wear any part of a chief's regalia or for a man or a woman to put on the dress belonging to the other sex or to change the boundaries of lands. These old communal lands were most jealously guarded. The people had strong local attachments, and it is said that thousands in Mexico are still living on the plots of ground tilled by their ancestors hundreds of years ago. Many of these were not Aztecs, though most of them had been at some time tributary to them.

We learn from picture-records that four cities on the coast of Mexico paid each, yearly, four thousand handfuls of the feathers needed in the exquisite mosaic-work for which these tribes were so famous, two hundred bags of cocoa, forty tiger-skins, one hundred and sixty kinds of certain colors needed in the temple-worship or for personal decoration. Other places paid tribute in cochineal, dyestuffs, gold, precious stones, besides the victims for sacrifice—the most valuable of all revenues.



## CHAPTER V.

### *ON THE WAR-PATH.*

**A**MONG some of the tribes of Anahuac a farmer or a mechanic or a merchant might be counted as a man; not so was it with the fierce Aztecs. Every male in that tribe was born to be a warrior; it was only when he was maimed, sick, old, or, worse than all, an outcast from his clan, that he could not claim the privilege of going to the battlefield. Even the priests took a leading part in every conflict. It was not only their business to interpret the will of the gods, but they marched at the head of the Aztec troops bearing a little image, or talisman, of the most famous of the war-gods of Mexico. It was also the duty of the priests to give the signal for the battle to begin. When war was decided upon by the great council, a messenger was sent to the tribe to be attacked, and in case the help of their allies and tributaries was needed word was sent also to them. No one dared to refuse to join the Aztecs when they took the war-path.

Like the Sioux and other tribes on our borders, the Aztec braves had a war-dance around a blazing fire the night before they set out on a raid, and ceremonies as heathenish and disgusting as any of those in which our wild Indians engage were common among them. The humble wigwams on our prairies and the proud, luxurious city enthroned on Lake Tezcuco sent out the

same kind of men in war-time. We can readily believe in the savage orgies held in the splendid square of Tlatililco when we remember the impurity and cruelty of old Rome when her warriors, builders and poets, her historians and statesmen, were moulding a civilization which made her the mistress of the world.

When the great snake-drum on the temple sounded the call to arms, the warriors from fifteen years old and upward gathered at the armory or house of darts belonging to their *calpulli*, where the weapons of their clan were kept. We have pictures of the armor they wore which correspond with the descriptions given by Cortez and his soldiers. The spear was their main weapon. It was made of hard and elastic cane, with flint points fastened into a slit at the end with gum and the strong fibres of the maguey. The spear sometimes had several of these flint tips. Their swords were made of tough wood, with grooves cut along the edge, in which was inserted a hard stone whose sharp edge was easily broken, but which cut like a blade of the finest steel. The bow was made of cane, and the arrows were carried in a quiver on the shoulder. They also had slings for throwing stones, which they used very skillfully. Shields were made of canes netted together, inwoven with cotton, encased with gilded boards and decorated with feathers. These were carried on the left arm, and were so hard that the Spaniards found that nothing but the arrows from their cross-bows could pierce them.

Every warrior, from the chief-of-men down to the rank and file, was painted. The common soldier sometimes had scarcely any other dress than the colors of his clan, fancifully applied to face and body; at best, he went to the field with head, feet and arms bare. A

quilted cotton tunic two fingers thick was so much like a coat of mail that the Spaniards were very glad to borrow the cheap and useful fashion. A chief wore his hair cropped above his ears, and a wooden helmet, over which he often stretched the skin of some wild bird or animal, the grinning teeth and fierce eyes of a bear or a tiger surmounting the painted face. The head of an eagle with hooked beak was a favorite device to represent the spirit of the wearer or the name he had won in battle. Lip-pendants, ear-rings and other gewgaws were worn if the soldier's means permitted such extravagance. The chief-of-men and his associate wore their hair tied with strips of leather colored red with cochineal. The towering plume of green feathers on the helmet was a mark of the highest rank which no other warrior dared to assume. A green stone hung from the bridge of the nose, and the ear- and lip-rings were of wrought gold. Bands of exquisite feather-work encircled the arms, wrists and ankles of the chief. On the field of battle a long tress of feather-work hung from the crown to the girdle. From this was suspended a small drum or horn, which the chief used in making signals to his men. As habits of luxury increased among the Aztecs their chief went out in a splendid litter. Gayly-dressed pages carried a gorgeous canopy over his head; and if obliged to alight, he was supported by chiefs of the highest rank. Cortez declares that these Indian chiefs came out to meet him in battle as they would go to some holiday parade, and that even the hardy Tlascalans had in this respect declined from their republican simplicity.

The army was readily prepared for a march. The common soldier carried his own provision. He had in his pouch corn-cake baked very hard, ground beans and

*chia* (a berry out of which he made a palatable drink). Coffee was unknown among these people until after the conquest, and chocolate was a beverage which none but the wealthy could afford. He had plenty of red pepper, and used it not only as a condiment, but also as food. Salt for seasoning was obtained from the lake that surrounded the city. Cornstalk sugar was a common luxury, and formed part of the bill of fare in camp. Special carriers accompanied the army, loaded with whatever was needed, such as tents, tent-poles, mats for bedding, camp-kettles and ammunition. They also had the ornaments with which braves who should distinguish themselves in battle were to be decorated before they left the field. One of these tokens was the privilege of wearing a wrap of peculiar color. If the army passed through the land of one of its tributaries on its way, provisions were always furnished to it by the people, and friends and allies brought presents as a token of good-will.

The Mexicans needed no other strongholds than their massive houses and temples. The country was peculiarly adapted to their methods of warfare. Paths like that through the famous pass of Thermopylæ, or still more easily defended, were common. There were hilltops and precipices from which stones could be rolled down on an assailing force, and retreats among the mountains where a great army could hide in ambush as did thirty thousand of the men of Israel behind the city of Ai in Joshua's day. The burning of the *teocallis* was always the token of victory. The warriors of the place who survived either fled or were taken captive, and the women and children, who were generally sent to some cliff-dwelling among the hills before the storm

broke on their homes, came back—if they came at all—to a scene of utter desolation.

But war did not always end thus. When a tribe refused to pay a valuable tribute, no attempt was made to destroy it, but merely to force obedience. The Aztecs once paid tribute to the Tepanacs, a tribe on the mainland, near Mexico. When their city became strong enough to rebel, a struggle took place for the mastery, in which the Aztecs were victorious. The immediate cause of this war was the possession of the great spring at Chapultepec, by which the city was supplied with water through an aqueduct. As this was on the *yaotlalli*, or neutral ground, between the Aztecs and Tepanacs, any attempt of the latter to cut off the water-supply of Mexico was taken as a challenge to war. Their success in this struggle made the Aztecs the leading power in the tableland. They became the head of a strong confederacy of tribes, and ruled with a high hand for nearly a hundred years, until, hated and feared by all their neighbors and crushed at home by the despotism of the council, the Aztecs were ripe for rebellion, and their beautiful domain fell an easy prey into the hands of the foreign invaders.

It is said that when Montezuma was asked why he had suffered the little republic of Tlascala to lift a defiant head between Mexico and the sea, he replied that the Aztecs would have crushed it long ago but that they needed victims for sacrifice and could get them readily in the skirmishes which constantly took place between the two tribes. Thus, with war as their chief business in life and a religion which demanded thousands of human sacrifices yearly, the Aztecs were glad of any pretext for an attack on their neighbors. The choice of a new war-chief was sure to bring on a con-



flict with somebody, as the ceremonies of his induction to office were never complete until he had brought home a train of captives. Some of these he must capture with his own hands—a feat which was sometimes accomplished by strategy, but oftener in a hand-to-hand fight. Although all these tribes believed that heaven was made for warriors and that none had higher seats there than those who died on the bloody stone of sacrifice, yet they had a natural love of life, and never yielded to their fate without a struggle. A Mexican's first aim in battle was not to kill his enemies, but to take captives. He would sacrifice a score of lives rather than fail in this aim.

The tactics of the Aztecs in war were those of rude nations. A favorite device was to feign retreat, and thus to decoy their victims into snares. Their ingenuity in such stratagems was equaled only by the patience with which they were carried into execution. The most daring warriors, and even the "chief-of-men" himself, would hide in some pit dug on a road toward which the enemy was enticed, and here they would remain motionless for hours, even days, like tigers waiting for a chance to spring on their hapless victims. They never left the field without carrying off their dead and wounded—a custom which sometimes turned victory into defeat.

These tribes all went into battle with a defiant war-whoop. Each clan had its own war-ery—usually its own name—and every pueblo had its standard. The device of Mexico was a cactus on a stone, rudely painted on a banner and carried on a pole high over the troop by a chosen standard-bearer; and it was as high a point of honor then as now to defend the flag at all risks.

When captives were taken, they were secured, if many, by wooden collars and fastened together in gangs; if few,

each warrior cared for his own prize. In the old picture-records of this country and carved on the stones of the monuments captors are seen holding prisoners by their long hair. On the sides of the sacrificial stone these scenes are carefully cut, the hand of one figure being raised to grasp the head-ornaments of his victim, who drops his weapons helplessly. Sometimes the captives helped to bear the spoils of war to the city of the conqueror. In every case they were considered as sacred objects devoted to the war-god, and were well fed and cared for. Ransom was entirely out of the question. The captor dared not spare his victim's life even when his own was in danger, as any loss in this respect was defrauding the war-god. The lynx-eyed priests were ever on the watch to detect and punish those who would be merciful, if any such there were in those dark days. The careless warrior who lost a captive and made the excuse of one of old, "As thy servant was busy here and there he was gone," met the same doom: "Thy life shall go for his life." When the wretched victims had been led home in triumph, they were taken first to the chief *teocallis*, or house of the gods, and after bowing to Humming-Bird and his hideous brother they were marched solemnly around the great stone of sacrifice, then taken away to a house set apart for those who were thus appointed to die. The home-coming of such an expedition was a great event. The warriors were received with the wildest din of music; flowers were showered upon them, and the air was filled with the odor of burning frankincense. The old men of the tribe carried the censers, standing in rows on each side of the path, their long hair tied on the back of their heads with gay strips of leather, and sometimes they bore a shield with a rod and

rattle, which they sounded in token of rejoicing that they were the fathers of such braves. Along the road were erected bowers decked with the choicest flowers to be gathered in that flowery land.

In 1497 a great army was sent out by the confederated tribes. It went far southward to Tehuantepec, and came back loaded with plunder and with multitudes of captives. Some of the ruined cities now found in those solitudes may then have been laid waste, but no record remains to tell of the scenes of carnage and rapine which must have marked this campaign. The confederates afterward ravaged all the Totonac region as far east as the Gulf-coast, swept it clean and recolonized it with their own people.

The victors in the tribal wars cared not to change the customs or the laws of a subjugated people; all they asked was tribute, and the question was often settled in one battle. When this was concluded by the burning of the *teocallis*—the signal of surrender—the amount and kind of articles of tribute and the time when this was to be paid were immediately arranged. The vanquished party were henceforth watched with jealous care by a tax-gatherer appointed by the victor; a house was set apart for his use and as a place of storage for the tribute until it should be sent away. Some tribes paid their tribute every eighty days, and others once a year. This tribute-money was sometimes borne to the capital on the backs of human victims who had been chosen by lot to suffer for the tribe on the altars of the conqueror. These sad processions must have been a common sight even in the few peaceful days known among these war-loving people.

After each fresh conquest the Aztecs adorned their city with a new temple, bearing the name of the conquered

people and filled with their gods. These senseless blocks of wood and stone were prisoners, and as such were punished severely when the tribe they represented rebelled. The victors sought to make the worship of these captured idols acceptable by stationing in each such building priests from the tribe from which the idols were taken.

At the time of the Spanish invasion the whole country seemed to be on the eve of one of those terrible conflicts by which some of the fairest portions of the earth had been desolated. The Aztecs had maintained their supremacy for nearly a hundred years, and now the tribes far and near, outraged by their oppressions, were brooding over their wrongs, awaiting some leader who should head a new confederacy and mete out justice to Mexico. She was drunk with human blood, and the tide of war was turning—as, in time, it always will turn against a people whose only right is might. Unheard by it, God had said of the beautiful Aztec city, as he had said of Babylon of old, “The cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### *SACRED PLACES AND PEOPLE.*

ABOUT thirty miles north of Mexico are the remains of Teotihuacan, a city so old that it was falling into decay when the Aztecs entered the valley. The ground upon which it stood seems to have been built over by succeeding generations. Three successive concrete platforms for houses, one above the other, have been found buried under the cornfields which have flourished there for centuries. So large was this city that its ruins cover a space twenty miles in circumference. It was a shrine where of olden time the native worshipers flocked with their votive offerings—little clay images, men's heads, arrows and pottery decorated in bright colors. Thousands of these now strew the plain or are brought to light by the rude ploughs of the country. There are two large pyramids—one dedicated to the sun, the other to the moon—standing like grass-grown hills among these ruins. One wide, straight street—called “the Path of the Dead”—is raised above the level of the plain and leads up to the pyramid of the moon. This is bordered by many small pyramids, which are supposed to contain the now-nameless builders of these great monuments.

This worship of the sun and the moon seems to have at one time prevailed throughout Mexico, and was still



retained in all the temples when other forms of idolatry were introduced by later settlers. In some forgotten age of their history the Mexicans had "exchanged the truth of God for a lie." Their belief in an invisible Creator and Ruler of the universe and the names and the character they gave him show that the ancestors of these people must have known of the one living and true God. They spoke of him as "He who is all in himself," "He in whom we live, all-wise, all-seeing, almighty and everywhere present, the Giver of every good, a Being of infinite purity and grace and the hearer and answerer of prayer." No images of this God were made; a prayer said to have been found among the old Aztec records tells us how he was regarded. Besides the sad picture which it gives us of the famines which often prevailed in Mexico, it reveals the breathings of one who, like Cornelius of old, was "a devout man and prayed to God alway:"

"O our Lord, protector most strong and compassionate, invisible, impalpable, thou art the giver of life. Lord of all and Lord of all battles, I present myself here before thee to say a few words; the need of the poor people, the people of none estate or intelligence. Know, O Lord, that thy subjects and servants suffer a sore poverty that cannot be told of more than that it is a sore poverty and desolateness. The men have no garments, nor the women, to cover themselves with, but only rags rent in every part, that let the wind and cold in. If they be merchants, they now sell only cakes of salt and broken pepper. The people that have something despise them, so that they go out to sell from door to door and from house to house; and when they sell nothing, they sit down sadly by some fence or wall or in some corner,

biting their lips and gnawing their nails for the hunger that is in them. They look on one side and on the other at the mouths of those who pass by, hoping, peradventure, that some one will speak some word to them."

Hungry Fox, a great Tezucan chief, built a temple to this god toward the close of his long life, when he had become heartsick at the abominations of the religion of the Mexicans. This temple was nine stories high. A tenth story, overhanging the others like a canopy, was painted black, to represent the sky at night, gilded with stars outside and decorated within with precious gems and metals in the highest style of art known to his people. This temple he dedicated "To the Unknown God." No image of him was allowed in this beautiful shrine, and nothing but incense, fruit and flowers was offered upon its altar. A sonorous piece of metal struck by a mallet called the worshipers together.

The common people seem to have known but very little of this good and great being. The gods they served were like those who made them—fierce, unholy and delighting in blood. Thirteen of these were superior to the rest, and two hundred were of lower rank. At the head of all these the Aztecs put their frightful war-god, Huitzilapochtli, or "Humming-Bird." This god was represented as a man with a broad face, a wide mouth and terrible eyes. He was girt about with a golden serpent ablaze with jewels, and held a bow in one hand and a bunch of golden arrows in the other. His dress glittered with gold, pearls and precious stones. He wore a necklace of human faces wrought in silver and hearts of gold. His left foot was shod with the feathers of the tiny humming-birds which gave him his name. At the feet of this god stood a little one called Milziton, or



MEXICAN GOD OF WAR, HUITIZILAPOCHTLI, OR HUMMING-BIRD.

"Little Quick One," which was borne by the priest at the head of the army in time of war. When this hideous idol was first seen by Europeans, there stood before it a brazier of burning coals in which lay three hearts just torn from the bleeding breasts of human victims.

Humming-Bird had a younger brother, a favorite with the Tezcúicans, who was also a war-god. His name, Hachahuepanenexcolzin, is almost as bad as his disposition, and we would not venture to write it except to give one of the curiosities of Mexican spelling. These two gods stood side by side in the old temple in Mexico, fitting representations of the dark-minded priests who made them. "The smell of this place," says Bernal Diaz, an old Spanish soldier whom we shall often quote, "was that of a charnel-house." We cannot wonder that whitewash and scrubbing-brushes were always brought into use when Cortez got possession of one of these blood-stained shrines.

Another prominent figure in Mexican mythology was Tezcatlipoca, "the Hearer of Prayer." His image was of black shining stone. An ear hung by a string from his neck, on which smoke was pictured, whose ascending wreaths represented the prayers of his distressed people. Stone seats were put in some street-corners of Mexico, in the hope that this god would rest upon them when he visited the city. On these sacred seats no one else was permitted to sit.

By far the most interesting character among these gods was that of Quetzalcohuatl, or "Feathered Serpent," the god of the air. Stripped of all the romance with which he is invested, this old hero appears as a tall, fair-faced man of a different race from any of those which inhab-



ited the valley. He had a broad forehead and long black flowing beard and hair, and came to Mexico from some distant land on an errand of benevolence. Some suppose him to be the leader of the Toltec tribes, and to have come with their seven ships which figure in Mexican history; but this is by no means clear. Neither does he seem to be the Votan of other traditions, although he did the same good work among the people which is ascribed to that hero. It was Feathered Serpent who taught these still-barbarous tribes those arts of peace so foreign to savage natures. The Mexican calendar and picture-writing were his invention. The riches which lay hidden in the bowels of the earth were all unknown until he unveiled them and showed men how to dig and refine gold and silver and to work in all precious metals. During his stay the land became a very Eden. Cities arose, and in the heart of the wilderness fair fields were opened to the sun. But these bright days did not last. The powers of evil became envious of the benevolent god of the air, and he was obliged to flee for his life.

The Mexicans tell a story of the rivalry between Tezcatlipoca and Feathered Serpent which is worthy of heathen idol-makers. Tezcatlipoca, fearing that he was about to lose the reverence of the people, disguised himself as a hoary-headed sorcerer and persuaded Feathered Serpent to drink pulque, or the fermented sap of the maguey. The event proved that it is no safer for a god to indulge in such intoxicating beverages than it is for men to do so. Poor Feathered Serpent became tipsy and wandered out of the country in disgrace. On his way to the sea to return to his own land he stopped at Cholula, where he found hearts open to receive him;



there he stayed for twenty years. The people built temples in his honor and sat at his feet to learn. Like Cain, "the Fair God," as he was called, disapproved of bloody sacrifices, and commanded his followers to offer nothing on his peaceful altars but sweet incense and the fruits of the earth. After twenty happy years Feathered Serpent left Mexico by the way he came. His snake-skin boat was waiting for him on the shore of the Gulf. Turning to his friends who had followed him, he bade them farewell, promising that some day he would come again from his home toward the rising sun and take possession of their country.

The white race to whom this old hero belonged are indebted to him for their successful entry into Mexico. At the time the Spanish vessels made their appearance, in 1517, there was a universal expectation that the Fair God was about to return, and the white sails of the vessels were mistaken for bright-winged birds who had come to bring back their benefactor from his long exile.

The Aztecs adopted this god, among many others, after they came to Mexico; his shrine at Cholula was visited by multitudes of devotees from all parts of the country. This city was older than Mexico, and is supposed by many to have been founded by the Toltecs. There, on the top of the famous pyramid of Cholula, was a large hemispherical temple in honor of this Fair God. Another temple was reared to him within the serpent-wall of the great temple of Mexico; it was entered through a gate fashioned like the mouth of a hideous dragon. The black, flame-encircled face of his image enshrined there and the altar dripping with blood had taught the people to think of him as a fit companion for the war-god himself—that most bloodthirsty of all Mexican deities.

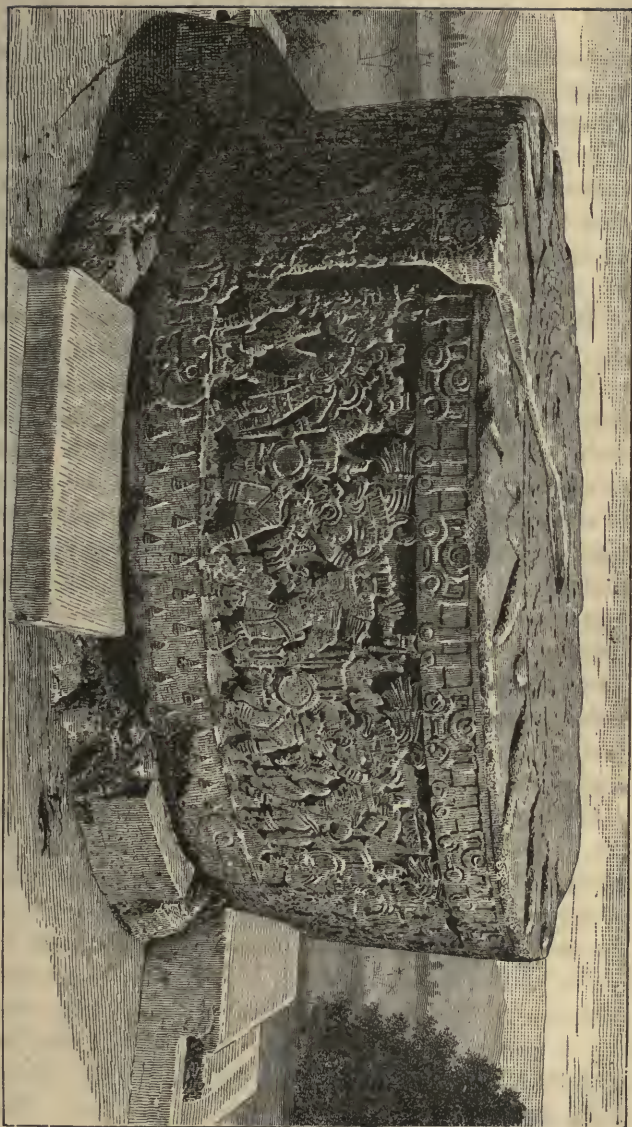


TEMPLE OF TIKAL, A SUBURB OF FLORES, YUCATAN.

There were thousands of temples in Mexico. They were built in the form of terraced pyramids with stairways on the outside leading to a paved platform on the top, where all worship was carried on. The great temple of Mexico was three hundred and seventy-five feet high. Each of its lofty terraces had its own flight of steps, rising one above the other on the southern side of the pyramid. In their worship the priests, with the victims, chosen for sacrifice, climbed the first of these stairways and passed entirely around the terrace until they reached the next flight of steps, and so, ascending in solemn procession, they wound on up and up to the great altar in sight of multitudes assembled on housetops and in the great square which surrounded the building. Three storied towers arose on the flattened top, and between these was the awful stone of sacrifice. The weight of this stone was twenty-five tons. It was an immense round block of green porphyry elaborately carved with strange figures illustrating acts of worship, and humped on its upper surface, so that the breast of the victim, bound and stretched upon it, could better be reached by the sacrificial knife. In the centre was a dishlike cavity with a groove running from it to the edge of the altar, to lead away the blood. The whole was a mute but eloquent witness to the character of the sacrifices offered upon it.

Each temple was not only a place of worship, but a watch-tower from whose commanding height priestly guardians overlooked their congregation. Like watchmen, they used to call out the hours of the night through their trumpets. The sacred fires were in two stoves near the altar. These were fed with wood, and, burning all night, shone out over the city. Here, too, were the





GREAT SACRIFICIAL STONE OF THE AZTECS, MEXICO.

observatories where astrologers studied the heavens or in that more spiritual worship they had learned of the Toltecs adored the starry host circling overhead.

In the towers which formed the corners of the great enclosure were deposited, after cremation, the ashes of the dead heroes of the tribe. In one of these, also, was kept a huge snake-skin drum, which was used to call the people together to witness a sacrifice or for war. The sound of this drum could be heard, it is said, far beyond the city limits—sometimes to a distance of eight miles.

These houses of worship were always the principal buildings in every town or hamlet in the land. Besides, there were many others on hilltops and sacred places throughout Mexico. One of them stood in the centre of every settlement. It was surrounded by a wall, which was often turreted and always high and strong; for in time of war it was around these temples that the battle raged most fiercely. Fronting the principal roadways, there were entrances to the enclosure on all four sides. These roads stretched, wide, clean and straight, several miles beyond the city, so that a retreating army, when pursued by the enemy, might have no hindrance if it sought the protection of the gods.

Standing on one of the lofty towers of the great temple in Mexico, Cortez counted four hundred places of worship in that city alone. Of the chief *teocallis* (house of the gods) he writes to Charles V., "The grandeur of its architectural details no human tongue is able to describe." The square in which it stood was surrounded with the great serpent-wall, each of whose four sides was a quarter of a mile long, giving room within the enclosure for a town of five hundred inhabitants. Forty high and well-built towers were along this wall. The



largest of these, says Cortez, had forty steps leading to its main body, which was higher than the tower of the principal church in Seville. Another writer says, "There were seventy temples within the square, each one of which had its images and blazing fires. Besides, there were granaries where the first-fruits of the land were gathered for use in the temple, storehouses for other kinds of tribute, a house of entertainment for pilgrims from a distance, a hospital tended by priests, an arsenal and a library, besides a garden where flowers were raised for the temple-service and accommodations for many of the priests." Curious imagery wrought in stone, woodwork carved, inlaid or richly painted, ornamented the interior of every apartment of the great building.\* Within the main temple were three large halls adorned with these sculptured figures and the rich feather-work hangings which were among the highest efforts of Aztec art. An army of priests was needed for the elaborate service of this temple. It is said that five thousand were employed in the great *teocallis*, besides women and children in multitudes. Seventy fires were to be kept up day and night. Incense was offered four times every day—viz., sunrise, midday, sunset and midnight. Besides their sacrificial duties, the priests were the school-teachers, historians, poets and painters of the tribe. They must have been hideous objects, dressed in long black robes, with blackened faces and tongues torn and bleeding with frequent penances. Their hair, which

\* In the year 1881 excavations were made in front of the cathedral in Mexico, where this building once stood, and a few feet below the surface were found the old capitals of the door-posts of the temple. They were heads of large stone serpents, each ten feet long and five feet high, with feathered ornaments carved out of solid stone.

was never cut nor combed from the time they entered the temple-service until they left it, was matted with blood and with cords twisted into the long mass. The chief priests were more elegantly dressed on state occasions. A costly and magnificent robe like that of the god whose day he celebrated marked the high priest of the nation. A huge tuft of white cotton worn on the breast was his sign of office. There were a few priestesses, who lived a nun's life in the cloisters of this temple. Both priests and nuns were free to come and to go, but those who had made a vow never to marry were punished with the utmost rigor in case they broke their vow.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE HABITATIONS OF CRUELTY.*

THE Aztecs believed in the immortality of the soul, both of men and of beasts. Heroes who died in battle and those who sacrificed themselves to the gods had the highest place their heaven could offer. They were supposed to be in the service of the Sun, and that after singing in his train as he passed through the heavens their souls went to beautify the clouds and birds and flowers with colors

“Bright as a disbanded rainbow.”

Even women and little children—especially those who died in the service of the gods—had as bright a hope as heathenism could offer. After death the women spent four years in heaven, and then were permitted to become birds, with the privilege of coming back to the scenes of earth if they wished, to live on honey and flowers. Hell was merely a place of darkness.

Yet, with these comparatively agreeable provisions for the future, the Aztec religion, wherever it prevailed, made this world “the region and shadow of death.” The Psalmist must have had in mind such a religion as this when he prayed that God would have respect to the covenant, since the “dark places of the earth were full of the habitations of cruelty.” Never, in any nation, was human sacrifice carried to so frightful an extent as

among these refined and cultured Indian tribes. The practice had been common among the Aztecs from the earliest times, and gave to the whole race a fierce and gloomy character which made them hated by all their neighbors. The position which they gained as head of the three confederate tribes afforded them an opportunity to engraft this hideous custom on the milder worship of the people around the lake. For about one hundred years, or during the time of this supremacy, human sacrifices and the sacrificial eating of human flesh prevailed throughout Mexico as never before. About the time of the Spanish conquest the burden of such a religion became intolerable, and Mexico seemed as ripe for destruction as was old Sodom or the Canaanites when their cup of iniquity was full. From Yucatan, on the far south-east, to the most distant of the Nahua tribes, on the north, the altars reeked with human blood. The practice was so universal, and so many victims were at last demanded, that death in this terrible form must have stared every one in the face. A large tribe on the Pacific slope was so nearly exterminated in one of the wars begun and carried on to obtain captives for sacrifice that men were not left to till the ground or work the mines; all who had not been slain outright in defending their homes were borne away to die on Aztec altars. A colony was sent over from Mexico city to take possession of the empty houses and unharvested fields, while the proud cities enthroned on the shore of the lake sought for other communities to lay waste. If silent walls could speak, many a beautiful city among the scores now in mournful ruin throughout Mexico could tell of scenes of carnage when, in the name of the gods they all worshiped, the foe came down upon them in



AZTEC GODDESS OF DEATH.



fierce attack and swept away the inhabitants as with a besom of destruction.

In these days of unbelief there are some who doubt the accounts given by both Spanish and native historians of human beings kept to fatten like cattle in a stall, of still-palpitating bodies thrown from the high altar down to the captor and his friends, who stood waiting to receive this horrible provision for a decorous feast to be eaten as sacred food at the command of the gods. But these writers, though differing from each other in many things, agree in their testimony concerning this. Cortez, who is apt to be more moderate in his statements than his followers, says of one of the Nahua tribes in his letters to the king, "These people eat human flesh—a fact so notorious that I have not taken the trouble to send Your Majesty any proof of it." During the siege of Mexico the Tlascalan allies of Cortez subsisted largely on the bodies of the slain, and Montezuma himself was reproved by his Spanish visitors for this horrible practice.

One of the descendants of Hungry Fox, the great Tezcucan chief, wrote in Spanish an interesting history of his people. In this he says that his great ancestor became disgusted with the sacrifices and cannibal feasts in which they engaged during their connection with the Aztecs, and that before their confederacy was broken up he made an effort to put a stop to all such practices and to return to the milder rites of their star-worshipping ancestors. But his voice was raised in vain; the old priests shook their matted locks and protested against his innovations. They pointed to Tenochtitlan, across the lake, as an instance of the glory and success to be won by the faithful votaries of the war-god. To give

weight to their influence, the tide of battle began to turn against the three confederate tribes, and Hungry Fox was obliged to yield to the popular clamor for human victims wherewith to appease the anger of Humming-Bird, the insatiable war-god.

Every month in the year had its bloody festivals. At one of these the handsomest and bravest of all the captives was for one year named Tezcaltipoca, after one of the principal gods, and was obliged to illustrate by his life and death the vanity of all earthly things. For one year he was dressed in the most elegant and costly robes, housed in the most luxurious dwelling the city afforded, married to four beautiful girls and regaled with flowers, music and sweet odors; his table was loaded with dainties and his couch was royal in its comfort and decoration. At the end of that time he was carried away from his splendid home and gay attendants, stripped of his raiment and led with solemn burial-chants to a little temple outside the city to die on the altar. As the fatal knife descended the old priest called on the gazing crowd to note this scene as the end of his sermon on life. Three times a year, Tlaloc, god of storms, demanded a human sacrifice. His home was in the fiery crater of Popocatepetl. In March, when the people prayed that the clouds which overhung his throne might pour out an abundance of rain on the ever-thirsty earth, little children were offered. Three times each year women were sacrificed. Once, in its closing days, when Talconian, mother of all gods, held high festival, a female prisoner suffered. She was obliged to dance until the last moment, then was beheaded and skinned and had her body thrown at the feet of the war-god. At one time two perfect victims were called for at once—one for the war-god, the other

for Tezcaltipoca. At the time corresponding with our month of October, during a feast called "the Coming of the Gods," the priests scattered cornmeal on the floor in the place where the gods were expected to enter, hoping to find the sacred footprints of this chief deity. They were not likely to be disappointed for want of contrivance on the part of these "medicine-men."\*

How far the priests were able to deceive themselves is shown by their long and severe penances. They fasted sometimes to the verge of starvation. They pierced themselves with thorns, bled their ears and cut holes in their tongues, through which sticks were thrust. It must have been difficult for a priest thus maimed to speak intelligibly. In times of great calamity an Aztec chief and a number of his followers are said to have offered their lives as a voluntary sacrifice on the altar of their country. Priests have been known to retire to the wilderness for a year's mortification of the flesh. Building a small hut, the devotee lived there alone, without light or fire and with scarcely enough of uncooked maize to keep himself alive. No man could go through this "great fast" more than once in a lifetime.

The manner of the victims' death afforded scope for variety. They were often dressed in fancy costumes and made to dance in character. Sometimes, like gladiators, they fought for their lives on a large stone platform in the great square of the city. The goddess of harvests

\* On the island of Cozumel, one of the sacred places visited by thousands of pilgrims from Mexico, the Spaniards found a huge image standing close against an inner wall of the temple. Behind this was a private door belonging to the priests, which opened through this wall into the back of the idol, whereby a priest entered and from his safe hiding-place answered the prayers of the people in an audible voice.

was propitiated by a human victim ground between mill-stones like the corn the deity was asked to bestow.

Every expedition in time of war, every trading-party which set out on its travels, the election of a head-chief, the inauguration of a new one or the dedication of a temple was marked by extraordinary sacrifices. When the great *teocallis* in Mexico was dedicated, in 1486, forty thousand persons are said to have been sacrificed to the terrible war-god. We would believe this to be an exaggeration but for the fact that the skulls were preserved in houses called *zompantli*, or "skull-place." One Spaniard, who was curious enough to count these ghastly relics arranged in order, gives the number as one hundred and thirty-six thousand.

Among the pretexts by which the victims were persuaded to yield up their lives was one common among Romanists when a young woman enters a convent. She goes to become the bride of Christ; so the Aztec girls were given to the gods. A story is told of one poor woman who was so determined to forego this honor that she fought for life. In her case it seemed that self-surrender was necessary to make the sacrifice acceptable, and after struggling with her for a while they let her go.

The most solemn of all festivals was that of "year-binding," as it was called, which marked the close of the cycle of fifty-two years. The people were taught that in the course of ages the world was to be four times destroyed and renewed, and that each of these events was to be looked for at these semi-centennial periods. As the time drew near they gave themselves up to gloom and despair. They did penances for past sins, and then faithlessly threw away their idols altogether, broke up their furniture, rent their clothes, neglected field and



mine, workshop and garden, and ended by a fast of thirteen days. The holy fire which had been kindled fifty-two years before on the temple-roofs was now suffered to die out, and the people sat down in a darkness of soul over which pitying angels must have wept. As the old year died the priests marched in solemn procession to a lofty hill a few miles outside the city, bearing with them the fairest of victims—some noble young chieftain taken in battle and reserved until this fateful day to be offered in sacrifice. He was stretched across the altar with his face upturned to the sky, while the shaggy-haired priests stood about him chanting their wild temple-hymns. Would the gods accept the sacrifice, or would the spirits of evil prevail? Unseen by mortal eyes, the air was full of them. From the poorest hut by the lake-side to the most lordly pueblo in the land, men were waiting in breathless silence for an answer. Mothers covered the faces of their little ones lest malignant deities engaged in the battle supposed to be going on in the air should swoop down and carry them away. The devoted father cut his ears till the blood flowed, hoping thus to avert all evil from his family. All eyes gazed aloft till the Pleiades, slowly gliding through the heavens, should pass the zenith. The suspense grew awful. Would Tlaloc, god of storms, rise in his fury from his throne on yonder volcano and sweep the valley with a whirlwind? Would their queenly cities go down in the salt floods of Tezcuco, or would an earthquake prelude the mighty catastrophe which would ruin a guilty world? Slowly the moments pass. The stars go by overhead, and then, at a signal from priestly hands, a shout rends the air. The Seven Stars have crossed the dreaded line: the world is safe for another fifty years. The sacred fire is



now kindled anew in the bleeding breast of the victim on the altar, and fleet runners carry it to temples, cities and hamlets far and wide. The people give themselves up to fourteen days of feasting and merriment. They refurnish their houses, spin and weave, and plant their fields. Life flows on as of old. But, in its best estate, all Mexico sat in darkness. Some there were, no doubt, who felt after God, sitting in humble silence at his feet, or as good stewards dispensed his bounty to others. To such his love and fatherly pity must have been revealed, since "in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." But no song of joyful trust has floated down to us out of the dense darkness that covered the land. There was many a cry like that of Solomon—"Vanity of vanities"—many a prayer for mercy, but none had reached the firm foundation where the triumphant Psalmist stood when he sang, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *CIVILIZATION OF MEXICO.*

**W**HILE the Mexicans built temples to the sun and the moon like those in which their ancestors worshiped in Asia and retained many of the religious forms which prevailed there, they forgot many other things which had been known in the Old World from the earliest ages. In the book of Job iron is spoken of as taken out of the earth; in Mexico mountains of iron-ore are found, but no use was made of it until Europeans showed the people what to do with this most valuable of metals.

Antediluvians like Jabal, "the father of all such as dwell in tents and such as have cattle," and old Tubal Cain, who "worked in brass and iron," would have looked upon the Mexicans as far behind the times in which they lived. The farmers of ancient Syria, such as Gideon and Ornan the Jebusite, taught oxen to tread out the grain on their threshing-floors; the Mexicans had never heard of such a thing. Of all the vast herds of cattle which roamed their uplands, not one had ever been tamed. There was not a beast of burden in all Mexico, neither had the people any idea that the milk of cows and of goats was good for human food.

The horse was unknown by the Mexicans until they saw those brought from Cuba by Cortez for the use of his cavalry. For a long time the Indians looked upon

horse and man as one animal, and supposed them to be supernatural beings. At one time, in an encounter with these people, a Cuban horse was left wounded on the field. The villagers near by, finding him in this condition, were full of sympathy for the poor beast. They brought him their finest flowers and their fatted poultry to tempt his appetite, but all in vain. He was only a horse, and he starved to death on fare which would have satisfied some of the best-worshiped idols in all Mexico. Some months afterward, when the Spaniards came that way again, they found the skeleton neatly polished and set up in the village temple as a new god. The spirited mustangs for which the country is now so famous all date from the conquest. Before that time important news was brought to the capital by fleet-footed runners. By means of relays at short intervals these men could bring despatches from the coast, two hundred and fifty miles distant, in twenty-four hours; this seems almost incredible when we remember the lofty mountains to be crossed on the way. The Aztecs boasted that fish which only the day before had been swimming in the Gulf were often brought to Montezuma's table.

An Indian road in those days had but one virtue: it was as nearly straight as it could be made, never turning to the right hand or to the left for rugged mountain or for precipitous ravine. A chasm was sometimes filled up with stones or bridged with a log, but otherwise there was only a footpath wide enough for one man. Ordinary travelers kept up a steady trot all day, even when carrying burdens—a habit still common among the Mexican Indians. Many footpaths used in these days were traveled by Montezuma's carriers, and some are now worn in deep ruts by the feet of many generations.

As it was considered beneath the dignity of the great chiefs to walk, they were carried in litters on the shoulders of porters. When they alighted, they were supported under each arm, and were led about like children when first attempting to walk. The tribe of Zapotecs, in the South, had a high priest who never walked at all, his feet being too sacred to touch the ground. The people bowed with their faces to the earth when he passed, and no one of the vulgar crowd ever saw him except in his litter.

The immense stones used in building temples in Mexico were hewn in some distant quarry and dragged by long files of men, with ropes, over wooden rollers, to their destination. They were hoisted to their places in lofty walls by some such simple but effective contrivances as were in use when the oldest cities of the world were built.

Men were also employed as carriers of merchandise in the trading expeditions from tribe to tribe. Companies of merchants were fitted out by the tribe not only with goods for sale or for exchange, but regularly prepared for battle in case of attack. Their journey was always a dangerous one. As they felt their way cautiously from one tribe to another they always had to cross the *yaotalli*, or debatable ground, or no man's land, by which each territory was surrounded. An experienced and honorable chief always led the party, which, when the porters were included, often formed a small army. Many a battle was occasioned by the visit of such an armed force, some of whom might always be suspected as spies. The return of such an expedition was an occasion for great public rejoicing, especially if it had come back successful. It was met by gay processions, and came marching home with flying colors, under arches of flowers

and greenery and pelted with bouquets. The traders went first to the central temple to lay an offering of their best before the idol. From thence they went to the great *teepan*, or council-house, to meet the chiefs who



TRADERS ON THE CANAL (MODERN).

had sent them out, and feast with them as honored guests and in token of fraternity. After these ceremonies they went each man to his own dwelling.

A Mexican home was unlike any known in Christian lands. In comparison with the clan to which a man belonged, the wife and the children held a low place. The



whole community had a claim upon him in his day of triumph and home-coming. The council of his kindred had named him at birth, educated him, trained him for war, chosen him a wife and married him to her, and they would bury him when he died ; and it was easy to see that duty to them came before all other duties. The habit of giving descriptive titles was shown in the name applied to the merchant. He was called "the man who exchanges one thing for another," or "the man who gets more than he gives."

Most of the commerce of the country was carried on in the way of barter. The artisan brought his own wares to the town market-place and exchanged them for whatever he wanted of his neighbor's goods of equal value. The money was cacao-beans, put up in small bags or lots of eight thousand. Expensive articles were paid for in grains of gold, which was passed from hand to hand in quills. Sometimes pieces of cotton cloth were used, or bits of copper instead of coin.

The market-place was a great open square surrounded by wide corridors, where venders sat with their goods protected from the weather. Cortez thus describes the market-place in the City of Mexico as he saw it in 1519 :

"This city has many public squares, in which are situated the markets and other places for buying and selling. There is one square, twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded by porticoes, where are daily assembled more than sixty thousand souls engaged in buying and selling, and where are found all kinds of merchandise that the world affords, embracing the necessities of life—as, for instance, articles of food as well as jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones,

bones, shells, snails and feathers. There are also exposed for sale wrought and unwrought stone, bricks burnt and unburnt, timber hewn and unhewn of various sorts.

"There is a street for game, where every variety of birds found in the country are sold, as fowls, partridges, quails, wild ducks, flycatchers, widgeons, turtle-doves, pigeons, reed-birds, parrots, sparrows, eagles, hawks, owls and kestrels; they sell, likewise, the skins of some birds of prey, with their feathers, head, beak and claws. There are also sold rabbits, hares, deer and little dogs, which are raised for eating.

"There is also an herb street, where may be obtained all sorts of roots and medicinal herbs that the country affords. There are apothecaries' shops where prepared medicines, liquids, ointments and plasters are sold;



THE SPLENDID TROGON OF MEXICO.

barbers' shops, where they wash and shave the head ; and restaurateurs, that furnish food and drink at a certain price. There is also a class of men like those called in Castile porters, for carrying burdens. Wood and coals are seen in abundance, and braziers of earthenware for burning coals ; mats of various kinds for beds, others of a lighter sort for seats, and for halls and bedrooms.

“There are all kinds of green vegetables, especially onions, leeks, garlic, watercresses, nasturtium, borage, sorrel, artichokes and golden thistle ; fruits, also, of numerous descriptions, amongst which are cherries and plums similar to those in Spain ; honey and wax from bees and from the stalks of maize, which are as sweet as the sugar-cane. Honey is also extracted from the plant called maguey which is superior to sweet or new wine ; from the same plant they extract sugar and wine, which they also sell. Different kinds of cotton thread, of all colors, in skeins, are exposed for sale in one quarter of the market, which has the appearance of the silk-market at Granada, although the former is supplied more abundantly. Painters' colors as numerous as can be found in Spain, and as fine shades ; deerskins, dressed and undressed, dyed different colors ; earthenware of a large size and excellent quality ; large and small jars, jugs, pots, bricks and an endless variety of vessels, all made of fine clay, and all, or most of them, glazed and painted ; maize, or Indian corn, in the grain and in the form of bread—preferred in the grain for its flavor to that of the other islands and terra firma ; *patés* of birds and fish ; great quantities of fish, fresh, salt, cooked and uncooked ; the eggs of hens, geese, and of all the other birds I have mentioned, in great abundance, and cakes made of eggs. Finally, everything that can be found throughout the whole

country is sold in the markets, comprising articles so numerous that to avoid prolixity, and because their names are not retained in my memory or are unknown to me, I shall not attempt to enumerate them. Each kind of merchandise is sold in a particular street or quarter, assigned to it exclusively, and thus the best order is preserved.

“They sell everything by number or measure—at least, so far, we have not observed them to sell anything by weight. There is a building in the great square that is used as an audience-house, where ten or twelve persons, who are magistrates, sit and decide all controversies that arise in the market and order delinquents to be punished. In the same square there are other persons, who go constantly about among the people, observing what is sold and the measures used in selling, and they have been seen to break measures that were not true.”

The Mexicans appear to have been a very cleanly people. Abundant provision was made in the cities for bathing. Great basins cut in stone, with steps leading down to the water, are still found. In many places there were underground reservoirs for rain-water.

Fountains and waterfalls were included in their landscape-gardening—an art that seems to have reached a perfection which European gardeners of that age could not exceed. Cortez describes “a garden near Mexico which was the largest, most beautiful and refreshing that I ever beheld. It is two leagues in circuit, and through the middle of it flows a fine stream of water. At intervals of about two bow-shots are houses, with beds of flowers, together with a profusion of herbs and odoriferous plants.” The botanical gardens contained specimens of every plant to be found in that end of the



continent. The floating gardens of Mexico, so often described, were light rafts of woven reeds on which turf was heaped. Through the matted vegetable growth thus produced willow stakes were driven, fastening all together, and in time the roots of plants reached down through the soil into the shallow water of the lake. Such gardens, linked together on the borders of the city, extended its boundaries far beyond its original limits. The terraced roofs of the houses were also airy gardens abloom with flowering plants, and even with small shrubbery. The whole city seemed devoted to floriculture. Out of this wilderness of beauty arose hundreds of towers, with many open squares surrounded with well-paved corridors and handsome public buildings.

As every male among the Aztecs was born a warrior, and as the army was almost constantly in the field, the house-building of this nation of banditti was mostly done by levies on subjugated tribes. They put up houses without a nail or a hammer. Hungry Fox, chief of the Tezeucans, employed a force of two hundred thousand men in building and furnishing a government house. The same great chief had in the centre of a magnificent park a country-house which, judging from its ruins still remaining, must well have compared with some of the finest royal residences in Europe. Enough can still be found to prove that art has sadly degenerated in Mexico since Aztec rule declined. With the despotic power of the tribal council, the greatest tyranny of custom prevailed throughout Mexico. Every act of civil and of common life was regulated for the people so rigorously that "the course of improvement," says one writer, "was chained as completely as in China or Hindostan."



The manners of the people showed great attention to all the proprieties of life. The Aztecs always saluted by touching the hand to the ground and then raising it to the head. When they appeared in the presence of the great chiefs, it was common to wear a coarse mantle over their rich garments, in token of respect to superiors in rank. The dignity and the decorum of an Indian council are proverbial among us, and the Mexican *teepan* was a model of tedious etiquette. Cortez says, "No sultan or infidel lord now known had so much ceremonial in their courts as did Montezuma." A censer with sweet incense thrown on the burning coals was swung before the honored guest by an Aztec host, that the very air might breathe its welcome to him. Hands were carefully washed and dried before and after meals, and the whole person was bathed every day. There were no tables or knives or forks, but finger-bowls and cotton napkins were commonly used, and dainty pottery. It is said that in the higher circles meats were kept hot on chafing-dishes, the guests being seated on clean rush mats placed on the floor; chocolate was served in cups of gold, silver or tortoise-shell, and an after-dinner pipe was as common there as here. The Aztecs became skillful cooks as the tribe increased in wealth, though the poor could never forget the day when, hunted into the swamps, their ancestors were often obliged to fall back on the glutinous scum of the lake as a substitute for more palatable food.

In dress as in architecture these people had advanced far beyond the more northern Indians. The costume of the citizen was a large square mantle (*tilmantli*), worn throughout Mexico; two ends of this were brought together and knotted under the chin. This flowing dra-

pery was often fringed or tasseled and sprinkled with gems according to the taste and wealth of the wearer. The colors were rich and varied, generally dyed before the cloth was woven, and often skillfully embroidered in fanciful designs on a plain ground. Additional mantles of feather-work and fur were common, and quilted cotton tunics. With sash, long and ample, tied about the loins, collars, bracelets and anklets of gold-embroidered leather richly adorned with precious stones, and gaudy pendants from ears, under-lips, and sometimes the nostrils, we have a picture of the Indian brave of Mexico which would quite rouse the envy of his less-cultivated red brother of our own Western frontier. The chiefs, as we have seen elsewhere, had other finery, belonging to them exclusively. The festival array of an Aztec was sometimes a beast mask or in skins flayed from human victims, in which young men dressed themselves to dance. Priests wore the robe of the god whose day they celebrated; the warrior, the colors of his clan. The women wore several skirts of different lengths, one over the other, so that the bottom of each skirt might be seen, while over all these were loose flowing tunics. These garments were often richly tinted and embroidered in tasteful figures. Stripes and plaids were common. A fine soft cloth woven of rabbits' hair and dyed in various colors was also used. Decorations of feathers, gems, pearls, little figures and trinkets of gold added great beauty to these costumes. The Aztec women walked the streets unveiled, though those of some of the other tribes wore a covering on the head. Their eyes were dark and their hair was long, black and thick, flowing about the shoulders. Their faces had the passive, even sad, look which marks their race.

No product of Mexican patience and skill was more justly admired than were the exquisite feather-mosaics. The artist sometimes spent a whole day selecting one tiny feather and gumming it in its place on a warrior's cloak or shield. The rainbow sheen of the breast and the throat of the humming-bird was most eagerly sought for this work ; it was almost as costly as though the glittering patterns were wrought in the gems it so perfectly imitated. The little bird whose plumage had been stolen was itself reproduced in the design, or fishes with gleaming scales or flowers of radiant colors shone out as though they were real, and not mere copies from nature. Birds, fishes and all other known animals were also imitated exactly in gold and silver, each hair and scale being most carefully wrought in the metal. This art, they claimed, was taught by Feathered Serpent, their hero-god. The same forms were cut in gems and worn as jewelry. One emerald thus carved was crushed with holy horror by a Spanish priest when he found that it had been worshiped as a god.

When the life of the Aztec reached its close and preparation was made for the funeral rites, the darkness with regard to the coming state in which the tribe walked became manifest. After the survivors had mourned all day in silence over their dead, seeking by tender entreaty and offers of food to win back the departed spirit, they filled the night with despairing shrieks and moans. They then made preparations for cremation. All the possessions of the dead man were brought together and burned with him. When a head-chief died, his body lay in state for a certain time dressed in the garb of his patron god. But a long and dreary journey lay between him and those regions of bliss promised to the great warriors of the tribe.

Wood and water were put beside him; a costly mask covered his face, and a green stone cut in the shape of a heart was placed between the cold, mute lips. A little dog was provided, to guide his master through the perils of the way, and plenty of paper passes were furnished for the time of need. The priests spoke of a wonderful place where mountains strike together, the road being guarded by "the great snake and great alligator, the eight deserts and eight hills." In earlier days a crowd of wives and servants stood by. The priests exhorted them to be faithful in the next world to their departed master, after which they were killed, and burned also with his ashes. At the funeral of Nezhualpilli, the son of Hungry Fox (A. D. 1515), just before the Spaniards came, it is said that two hundred male and one hundred female attendants thus suffered. With the bodies were burned, in a vast funeral pyre, quantities of rich stuffs, jewels, weapons, ornaments and costly incense—everything, in fact, needed to keep up the dead man's state in the next life. So far as possible, the other classes aped this horrible fashion. Some made wooden statues of their friends, with hollow places in the necks, in which their ashes were put. These were kept as family idols.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AMONG THE BOOKS.

THE uncivilized man pictures the event he wishes to record. If he is describing a battle, he draws something which suggests war—his arrows, his tomahawk or the scalp of his foe. Water is often expressed by a wavy line; a month, by the figure of the moon; a day, by that of the sun. In such rude pictures originated the old Hebrew alphabet in which Moses wrote, as is shown by the names of the letters. Thus, *aleph* means “an ox;” *beth*, “a house;” *gimel*, “a camel;” and *daleth*, “a door.” Through ages of use the lines of these pictures were changed and simplified, until they became merely letters in which the original design could scarcely be traced.

An advance in civilization is shown by an effort to express abstract ideas by signs. Among the ancient Egyptians an ostrich-feather was chosen to represent the idea of truth. They went still farther, and used signs to represent sounds as our letters do. Thus the figure of a hawk meant the sound *a*, etc. In the next step in written language both pictures and symbols are dropped, and signs are used only to represent the sounds of spoken language—characters which can be combined to make syllables and words. This is phonetic writing. If a man can write one word in this way, he can go on and write a hundred words, or five hundred if he has learned to use



five hundred words in conversation. Such a person is no longer a savage: he has become a partially-civilized man.

Every letter used in the composition of this book has such a history of civilization as this. Tracing it to its fountain-head, we find ourselves on the banks of the Nile, among the pyramids of old Egypt, where men made their first rude attempts to write language. "In every letter we trace," says Max Müller, "lies embedded the mummy of an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph," or symbol. The Phœnicians, who were the travelers and the wide-awake people of their day, visited Egypt and there learned the use of letters. What the Phœnicians knew, they taught to the Greeks, who in their turn became the teachers of all Europe. They began to write language about B. C. 600. It was from these people that the Romans—whose alphabet we use—got their first idea of a written language. The very name they gave their letters tells the story. It is *alpha beta*, the first two letters of the series used by the Greeks. The written languages of the New World have no part in this history of our alphabet, as the characters used by the American tribes are of their own invention. It is very doubtful whether until this century any of them ever got much beyond picture-writing.

About the year 1821, Se-quoy-ah, a Cherokee Indian, heard a white man who was visiting his tribe read a letter. Those who have all their lives been accustomed to seeing people read have no idea of the effect produced on this untutored child of the forest when he discovered that the curious little black marks on paper had conveyed ideas to the mind of his visitor, and that there were other white men who would find the same meaning in them.

He began to think and to ask questions about this strange fact, and slowly he grasped the idea of making characters which would represent the different sounds of the human voice. After months of study he found that eighty-five distinct sounds, or syllables, were used in Cherokee conversation, and that all the words with which he was familiar were combinations of these. He contrived eighty-five signs, or characters, which represented these sounds. This done, it was easy to put them together to make words; and the Cherokees had a written language so simple that under the guidance of Se-quoy-ah these Indians have gone beyond their white brethren, and in their system of phonetics have got rid of a world of rubbish, in the shape of useless or silent letters, with which our written words are encumbered.

Some have claimed that the Mayas of Yucatan—a people supposed to have descended from the builders of the magnificent cities now in ruins there—once had such a phonetic alphabet, but this cannot be proved until a key has been found to the records carved on their monuments. So far, these are still an enigma to the curious student. The Toltecs, Tezcucans, Aztecs, and other Nahua tribes, had a few symbols representing ideas, but most of the numberless manuscripts found at the time of the conquest were in picture-writing. It is not proved that they had the art of writing sounds, although they seemed to be rapidly working toward it.

The Aztecs were very skillful in representing the forms of birds, animals and fishes in gold and silver; but the same objects, when used in picture-writing, were strangely distorted. They made no difference in size between men, women and children, but indicated difference of age by dots near the head of the figure repre-

sented. Their human beings were always big-headed, long-footed, with faces in profile, immense noses and a front view of one staring eye. The work was otherwise well done, with clear strokes and fadeless coloring. The priests were the great picture-writers and historians of the tribe. Their law-records were said to have been so accurate that the Spanish government always took them in evidence when Indian testimony was required. There were several different styles of penmanship, no one of which is now understood by any living person. In less than one hundred years after the conquest there were but two persons who could read the manuscripts which escaped the general wreck. Both of these men were very old, and neither was a skilled interpreter.

The Romish priests became very much interested in Mexican picture-writing. When it was decided that the Indians could be trusted with their old art, the monks began to encourage them in it, and even to study it themselves in order to communicate the truths of the gospel to these poor people in the way most familiar to them. In some cases they were successful. Many a native who had gone faithfully through his prayers in an unknown tongue now began for the first time to understand them. The Aztecs were a deeply religious people—as, indeed, were all the Mexican tribes—and when they came to unburden their hearts to the priests in the confessional, they could in no way express themselves so well as by their old pictures. Many learned the art in order to relate their religious experience, and thousands of new manuscripts were written, some of which remain to perplex the antiquarian. A monk who understood picture-writing says he was literally overwhelmed by these Indian confessions on long strips of muslin.

Even those natives who had been taught the use of the Roman alphabet would return to their old art whenever they could.

Back of these monkish documents are writings which no one can understand. Not long after the conquest one of these was sent to Charles V. by Mendoza, the first viceroy of New Spain. It is called the Mendoza Codex, and is a copy of some old manuscript, since it is done on European paper. The Spanish vessel by which this book was sent was captured in mid-ocean by the French and taken to Paris with other booty. There the chaplain of the English ambassador saw it, and bought it. It was taken by him to England and engraved as one of the illustrations of Purchas's *Pilgrimage*. The original picture-book was lost for a hundred years, but finally was found and put in the Bodleian Library, where it now is. Spanish and English interpretations of the Mendoza Codex have been published, but are not to be relied on.

An entirely different style of picture-writing is seen in what is called the Dresden Codex. This manuscript was first heard of in 1739; it is an original, painted in fine, delicate characters on agave-paper. There is no clue to the origin or the interpretation of this beautiful manuscript, though some of the figures and the characters are like those carved on the stones of Palenque, and may possibly illustrate manners and customs of Southern Mexico in vogue several hundred years ago.

About the time it was deemed necessary to invent an Indian Virgin Mary for these poor people, Boturini, one of their warmest friends, devoted himself to a long and patient search among them for relics and manuscripts, hoping to find something which would help the



monks in this pious effort. He lived in their cabins, became familiar with the various dialects and gained the confidence of the people, and thus obtained a knowledge of their history and traditions better than that of any other European. After making a great collection of maps and manuscripts, he started with his treasure for Spain. But the authorities took alarm at these signs of sympathy with the Indians. Boturini was arrested before he could get out of Mexico; all his papers were taken from him and stored in a damp room in the viceroy's palace. Some of them were stolen, some became so mouldy that they fell to pieces; and in time the collection which had cost so much time and labor was entirely lost.

Sahagan, a Franciscan monk, wrote a long history of the people among whom he labored, but it was deemed a dangerous enterprise tending to perpetuate the heathenism which was still wrought into the warp and woof of Mexican Christianity. Sahagan dared not publish his book, and for nearly three hundred years it was as much lost to the public as was one of the picture-writings of which he spoke.

The world lost the best history of Mexico ever written when the bigot Zurramaga emptied the great library of Tezcucio into the town market-place and burned it there; the smoke he raised seemed ever after to linger cloudlike over the vanquished race. What remained of their early records was hidden away, like their lost cities, until their very memory perished, and none were left to read the mouldy fragments which here and there have come to light.

The Aztec manuscripts were folded in a curious zigzag manner, something like a fan, and stiffened at each end



by two pieces of light wood. For paper, agave-leaves were used, and sometimes a piece of white cotton cloth or a neatly-dressed deerskin. Strips of these, one or two feet broad and from twenty to thirty feet long, were neatly joined together. The folds in these were the pages, and the boards at each end were the cover, of the book.

The Aztec language was copious and polished, and the orators of the tribe were very eloquent in the use of it. The words were often long, some of them having fifteen syllables. Besides this language, there were many others spoken; some have counted thirty-five dialects at the time of the conquest. Tradition says that the poet-chieftain Hungry Fox was the author of sixty hymns to the true God, only a very few of which, however, have come down to our time. Be this as it may, it is not likely that any of these compositions were written until the Roman alphabet came into use among his people, but were preserved in the memories of his followers.

In writing figures the Aztecs expressed a small number by circles or by units. A tiny flag represented the number 20; a feather was 400; a sack, 8000; a flag with two cross-lines was 10, and the same picture with three dots beside it stood for 24. Records of the grain and other products which were furnished for the use of large Aztec communities are still preserved.

Nothing so well shows the high grade of civilization to which these Indians attained as their system for the measurement of time; this, it is supposed, they inherited from the Toltecs. They had discovered the exact length of the solar or tropical year, and the necessity of leap-years in order to bring their time up to the seasons. They divided this year of three hundred and sixty-five

days and six hours into eighteen months of twenty days each, and these months again into four weeks of five days. This left an excess of five days which did not belong to any month. During this time it was considered to be worse than useless to do any work, since the powers of evil would thwart their best endeavors unhindered by the gods, who were all off duty. No prayers were offered to them, therefore, and those who had a heart to laugh when everything was in such dire confusion gave themselves up to amusement. The fact that

"Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do"

must often have been emphasized in these times of general license, and probably furnished the reason why these days came to be considered particularly unlucky days.

The leap-year of the Aztecs came at the close of their period of fifty-two years, or four cycles of thirteen years each, when thirteen days were added to make the time right with the seasons. These thirteen days were the solemn season of year-binding, described in a previous chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

### *CHILD-LIFE IN MEXICO.*

LIFE from its outset must have been a serious business with the Mexican boys and girls. They were taught from their cradle to endure hardship, to sleep on the floor on a mat, to suffer hunger and thirst, pain and fatigue, without complaint. Of home, in our sense of that word, they could have known but little, since education in all its branches was almost entirely in the hands of the government. The fathers and the mothers of Mexico may have had as much natural love for their children as parents have in our own country, but parents had much less opportunity to spoil their children by the over-indulgence which is possible here. Both boys and girls were taken from home at a very early age, to be brought up in the public schools of the tribe.

Some of the laws of Aztec society would not be endured by the young people of our day and country. For instance, respect to parents was carried so far that even after marriage a young man dared not speak in the presence of his father without first obtaining his permission. The wife and the children of a merchant who was away on one of those dangerous trading expeditions were not allowed the luxury of bathing while he was absent; they could not wear their best clothes or live on anything but the plainest fare until he returned in safety. These sacrifices were made to win for him the favor of the gods.

In case of prolonged absence and great peril the mother and the children did penance by cutting themselves with flints. The art of doing this properly was one of the lessons taught in Aztec public schools. The children were trained to believe that the sight of blood pleased the cruel deities who were supposed to preside over the commerce of their country.

Scarcely did a child open its eyes on this world when religious ceremonies for its benefit began. An astrologer was called in to decide whether or not it was born under a lucky star. This question was not raised, however, about the children born during the last five days of the year: these were always accounted as unlucky, and the little unfortunate who then entered on life was dubbed from the outset "useless man" or "useless woman," as the case might be, and neither his own good sense nor the good management of the parents could save the youngster from a double share of this world's troubles. When the little one was two or three days old, it was carried out of doors by an orderly procession of its friends and laid on a heap of freshly-cut grass. It was then bathed (some would call the ceremony "baptism"), while the gods were invoked in its behalf, the petitioners kneeling on the ground with their faces to the east. At this time a baby-name was given to the infant, by which it was known in the family circle for a few months only; then a priest came to give the child its second baptism and its proper name. It was called always after some object in nature. A little girl was often named after one of the beautiful flowers with which the whole land was abloom. Every name had a meaning and could easily be written, since it was not spelled, but pictured. It was after this second ceremony that a bow and arrows were

laid on the pillow of a baby-boy, to signify that he was born to be a warrior. In this same way a tiny spindle and distaff were given to a girl-baby, to show that her business in life was to spin, weave and provide for a family. A stone mortar and pestle were buried under the family grindstone, where the mother ground corn to ensure plenty of food in store for her daughter, while the bow and arrows given to her little brother were in due time buried in the fields where it was expected he would some day fight. By this ceremony it was supposed that he would be made successful as a warrior.

A boy who lived to grow up and make a figure in the world was named three times. When years had passed, if he survived the fasts and penances by which he was initiated into the ranks of the priests or the warriors, or when, as a common soldier, he found glory on some bloody battlefield, he had a new name given to him, by which he was ever afterward known. Any remarkable circumstance in a man's life was apt to be commemorated in this way. This is a very old custom, and is often described in the Bible. Thus, Abram and Sarai were renamed Abraham and Sarah in their old age, because God at that time covenanted to make them the parents of a great nation. When Jacob struggled all night by the ford Jabbok, God said, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and hast prevailed." The name "Hungry Fox" was given in this way to the most famous of all the chiefs of Anahuac as a memorial of the years of distress and privation through which he passed before he reached his high position. The Aztec "chief-of-men" had a third name, which well expressed his gloomy,



superstitious character. It was Montezuma, "the sad or severe man."

At a certain time in the year every child which had reached a proper age had its ears bored. The same month all the boys and girls were lifted by their ears, four or five times, from the ground, in order to make them grow straight and tall.

Home-life was always short. There was seldom any big brother or big sister at home to tease or to overawe the little ones, since all over eight years were in school, and were married as soon as they left school. It was not necessary for any family to have a large dwelling. A pair of rooms opening into each other and unconnected with the rest of the house was probably enough for most of them. Even the most elegant mansions found in Southern Mexico were arranged in this way, and accommodated scores of families.

Before the State took the children in charge they were taught to work. Some old picture-writers of that day have given a description of the progressive steps in the education of children. Three small dots over the head of one of their human figures show that it is intended to represent a boy or a girl three years of age. There is a picture of half a corncake near these dots, to show what was such a child's allowance for one meal. More dots and a whole corncake tell us that the child has grown older. As years go on we see the boys beginning to carry burdens. One picture shows a boy of four learning to do easy little tasks; he carries a willow basket to market for his father. A girl of the same age takes her first lesson in spinning. The boy of six goes out into the field to pick ears of corn; a year later his father teaches him how to fish in the lake. He paddles about in a little

canoe and learns how to handle a bow and arrows. The girls, meanwhile, are set to grinding corn and cooking cakes for the family—among the chief occupations of a Mexican woman's life to this day.

Since human nature is the same all the world over, we may be sure that even among the industrious people of Anahuac there were some who were lazy and selfish, but this, like most other family matters, was regulated by the government. A lad who would not work when he was bidden was made to stand over burning pepper until he was almost choked with the smoke, or he was beaten with a thorny stick. A youngster who would not speak the truth had his lip punched with a thorn. Laziness seems to have been counted as an unpardonable sin among these people. The children were kept busy on principle. In this respect, and in many others, these Indians differ widely from their red brethren who rove our prairies and live by the chase. Among the Nez Percé and other tribes of the North the boys are taught to endure bodily discomfort with patience, but never to work, tilling the fields, and even felling lumber and building the houses, being considered woman's work. Our Indians think it unsafe to compel a boy to obey his parents, lest his spirit be broken.

The public schools of the Aztecs were called "houses of the youth." These buildings, which were often quite extensive, adjoined the temple, and were always under the care of the priests. They had other expressive names for them, such as "the place where I grow" or "the place where I learn." The teacher was called "the speaker of the youth," or was commended to his pupils by the pleasant name of "elder brother." The teachers of the girls' department were sedate old maiden-ladies

who had forsaken the world and taken up religion as a profession.

Reading and writing in Mexico were not the simple studies which in these times are set before a child of five or six years. The vast majority of the people knew nothing of these fine arts.

Besides the use of the brush and the pencil in picture- and map-drawing, history was committed to memory, together with national hymns, war-songs and prayers used in the temple-service. The studious pupil was taken out on the temple-roof at night to study the heavens with the old astrologers. They knew the Pleiades and other constellations, and were able to measure off the years by these starry timekeepers. Some of the little ones were sent to the temple at a very tender age. It is probable that on account of the frequent battles of that warlike tribe there were many orphans under the care of the government.

The temple was also an industrial school. Every boy and every girl had work to do to keep its numerous buildings and courts in order. The great stairs and terraces by which the altar was reached from the outside were soiled with the feet of many long processions going to and coming from that place of blood, or by the clouds of dust for which the valley is still famous during the long dry season. The tessellated pavements of shrine and hall and corridor had to be cleansed frequently, or they could not have compared favorably with the streets of the city, which, we are told, were swept daily by a thousand men. The priests' quarters were also in the temple, and, with the vast army of these officials (said to have numbered five thousand in all), there must have been work enough for all the un-

married girls and women in the tribe. To the girls, also, was given the duty of bringing water from the beautiful fountain in the temple-court to use in religious service. They also had care of the flowers which grew in the temple-garden, and which were always in demand as offerings to the idols. Nor did their duties close with the long bright days of the tropical year; three times in the night they rose to look after the fire on the roof, which was never suffered to go out. The boys cut the wood and brought it in, and it was woman's work to put it in the stoves and sprinkle in the flame a fragrant gum much used in worship. Such of the girls as showed aptness were taught to embroider cotton cloth in gay colors and to do certain kinds of fancy-work in feathers. Besides weaving this cloth, they made it up into the quilted armor with which the public armory was stored.

The boys were no less industrious. They were up at sunrise, and climbed to the temple-roof to hail the sun as he rose over the mountain-walls of the valley. Here the old priests stood waiting, with their solemn faces turned eastward, until the first red rays shot upward into the cloudless heavens. Then, amid joyous acclamation and kissing their hands to the orb of day, a hymn was chanted in his praise, and quails and incense were offered in sacrifices to him as to a god. At other times the boys connected with the temple were sent out on a curious hunting expedition into the forests which then covered the mountains. Accompanied by a priest who understood the business, they gathered spiders, small serpents, scorpions, and other poisonous creatures with which the country abounds. These were brought back to the temple and burned with tobacco in a very ceremonious way. Out of this disgusting mixture was made a sacred oint-



ment with which the priests rubbed themselves, offering it also to the idols in sacrifice.

Many of a boy's occupations were such as might be classed among amusements. Once in their month of twenty days the Aztecs had a religious festival, when the braves of the tribe appeared in their gay costumes, each in the color of his clan, to engage in feats of arms. The boys, with their teachers, were obliged to attend this rehearsal, which generally took place in the public square surrounding the great temple.

Everything was regulated by government orders. The tenth day of February was set apart for what the Mexican boys knew as "fishing-day." It was a great holiday, even when the sport was so carefully regulated by the elders that in our free-and-easy times it would not be called sport at all. These Indian boys were taught to catch water-fowls by a very ingenious stratagem. An empty gourd was left floating on the water so long that the birds became used to the sight of it. The fowler then came quietly among the birds, wearing on his head another gourd, pierced with eyeholes, his hands being free to drag his hapless victims under water by their legs. They also snared game as our Indians do—by driving the wild animals they used for food into a net or pitfall, or by surrounding them.

Some of the occupations of these Indian boys deserve the name of play. They had a ball-game like tennis, for which courts were built. In some of the communal houses still found in the southern part of Mexico the elegant rooms which were used for this purpose are found, showing the luxurious character of the people who built them. They played with india-rubber balls, and managed to carry on the game without using their



hands or their feet. Whoever touched the ball with either hand or foot was out.

At fifteen the boys were put into a public school of arms, under the care of experienced chiefs deputed by the council for that business; here they were taught to handle weapons skillfully. The lads then entered the ranks of the warriors. Long and rapid marches were common, and, as the youth went fully armed or carried the arms of one of the warriors, he soon found that war was no pastime. The lads also carried the baggage of priests who were traveling on religious errands. Their graduating-day came in our month of May, when the feast of the god Tezcatlipoca was celebrated. It was always a joyous occasion, in spite of the fact that on that day a young man, the fairest, noblest and most gifted of the captives, was offered in sacrifice to this god. For a whole year the victim had been petted and feasted; that day all his fine clothes were taken from him, and his gay companions, his luxurious quarters, his music, flowers and games, were left behind, and, surrounded by wild-eyed priests, he went with a solemn procession to a bloody death outside the city. But it was a gala-day for the lads in the temple. The women prepared a feast for them, including a graduating-cake sweetened with honey. It was the great frolic of their lives. They sang and jested and raced in the temple-corridors. Those who were in the classes below them had as much fun at their expense as the young people of our times have on All Fools' day, and the young women pelted the graduates as they ran the gauntlet of their fellows.

It was unlawful for an Aztec youth to remain unmarried, and his matrimonial affairs were generally settled by the time that temple-service and education were ended.

He had not the trouble of proposing to the young woman who was to be his wife; that was the business of his clan, who employed one of their matrons as a go-between to arrange the matter for both parties. The wife was purchased, and became the property of her husband. The first step was to find out, not whether the young lady was willing, but whether the birth-stars of the young people agreed. If this question was settled to satisfaction, the marriage ceremonies went on. After a long exhortation from the priest the young people were united by tying their garments together in a strong knot; they then walked seven times around the fire, casting incense into it. After this the pair fasted four days and did penance in perfect silence, sitting on the floor, and the marriage ceremony was complete.

In October, when it was believed that all the gods arrived on a visit to earth, cornmeal was strewn on the floor outside of Tezcatlipoca's shrine, in order that his footsteps should be seen as he entered. On the twentieth of the month the boys, dressed to look as much like monsters as possible, had a dance around a great fire in the square. The old chiefs got drunk if they chose (a privilege never allowed the young men), and always burnt a prisoner or two before their revels were ended.

With all their ferocity, there were some softer traits in the character of the Aztecs which relieve the picture of those days. Amid the universal despair which marked the festival of year-binding, when property went to wreck and the whole country seemed shrouded with mourning, the Aztec mother covered her baby's face while the priestly procession marched by her door, lest, if the world should be destined to survive for another

cycle of fifty years, her little one should live on as a mouse.

The temple of the goddess Sentol, who was supposed to preside over the harvests, was visited in May by troops of little girls, who came bringing ears of corn to be blessed. These ears were afterward taken home and put in the granary, in order to sanctify all that was in it.

In time of famine poor parents were taught by the priests that they would win special favor of the gods by selling their little ones for sacrifice. The price of a boy-baby was but a basket of corn, and a girl brought still less. Tlaloc, god of storms, received most of these offerings. The poor little creatures had their faces painted, brightly-tinted paper wings were fastened to their shoulders, and, dressed in gay clothing, they were borne along the streets in litters fancifully decorated with feathers and flowers, to be drowned in a whirlpool or exposed to birds of prey on the mountains. If the frightened children cried on the way to their death, so much the better. A din was kept up in the streets as they passed along, to drown their piteous wail. At the water's edge the priests received them and carried them to their doom. For their comfort the weeping mothers were told that the souls of children thus devoted to Tlaloc went after death to a cool, delightful place where they were happier than they could possibly have been on earth. There was a hall in the inner part of the great temple where these souls of the little ones were supposed to come on a certain day each year to assist in the service, and thither went these poor mothers to commune with the departed spirits or to think over their meritorious act of devotion.

## STORY OF THE YOUTH OF HUNGRY FOX.

Some of the descendants of Indian chiefs who were carried to Spain became noblemen in their adopted country. Two of them wrote histories of ancient Mexico. The pictures of imperial splendor with which they dazzled the eyes of their European readers were, no doubt, highly colored to suit the times and to vindicate their own claim to rank with the princes of Spain. The brightest figure which they describe is that of a chief who was, no doubt, a king among men, whatever may have been his office or his title. The story of his boyhood and his youth is a picture of life in one of the palatial houses of Mexico during one of its stormiest ages.

About one hundred years before the Spanish came into the valley the city of Tezeuco was taken by its neighbors, the Tepanacs, and its people were brought under tribute to the conquerors. The son of the Tezcuacan chief was then a boy of fifteen just graduated from school, and probably out in his first battle. When the Tezcuacans were forced to retreat, the boy took refuge in a tree. While hiding there he saw his father and a few faithful followers overpowered by the enemy and literally cut to pieces. He waited until the victors had gone, when he cautiously made his way down and fled away, only to be discovered and carried in triumph to the Tepanac city. With fettered hands and a yoke about his neck, he moved on with a sad procession of captives through the fields and the forests, across the lake, and on and on till they reached the flower-wreathed arches under which the Tepanac elders and women greeted their victorious army with songs of welcome. He was led to the temple to bow before the idol, and then, with other prisoners, to await the death which his captors should choose for him. In



this place of doom he found that the keeper of the prison was one of his father's old friends. As the story goes, the old man, knowing that no ransom was possible in the case, offered to take his place in the cell—a kindness which cost him his life. After his release the boy found his way to the Aztec capital, and through the influence of friends there he was allowed to cross the lake to his old home in Tezcucó. Here he lived a quiet, studious life for eight years, watched, no doubt, by the eagle-eyes of the Tepanac deputy, who never forgot that some day the slain chief would be avenged by the hands of his son.

In time a new Tepanac chief was elected, more fierce and suspicious than the conqueror of Tezcucó, and congratulations on his accession to office seem to have been expected from all his tributaries. Our young Tezcucan came with others, bringing an offering of flowers; but a cold reception awaited him, and he was warned that his life was in danger. He returned to Tezcucó as soon as possible, only to find that his life was not safe there even in his capacity of a humble student. Maxtla, the Tepanac chief, had determined that he should die. Orders were given that he should be murdered while attending one of the religious festivals. His teacher, with fatherly care for the youth, put in his place a person who strongly resembled his pupil, and thus a second time was his life saved by the sacrifice of that of another.

Maxtla now sent a strong body of soldiers to Tezcucó, with orders to kill the young man wherever or whenever they found him. He was playing ball in the courtyard with a party of friends, and, desiring to finish the game, he ordered refreshments to be set before the soldiers. Without losing sight of their intended victim, the hun-



gry men sat down to eat. Now, Tezcucan etiquette demanded that guests should be welcomed with the sweet fumes of incense. The attendants were told to heap the burning censer, which stood in the doorway, high with fragrant gums, until such a dense smoke arose that by its aid the young man slipped away unobserved and hid in the earthen pipes of an aqueduct under the house. When night came on, the fugitive made his way into the street and to the cottage of a friend not far away. A price was now set on his head and a reward offered to any one who would bring him, dead or alive, to Maxtla.

The close search which followed reminds us of King David's wandering life among the hills of old Judea. At one time the youth is hidden by friendly hands under a heap of maguey-fibres which had been prepared for the loom; then he is heard of in the wild mountain-fastnesses of Tlascala, living on roots and herbs. Venturing out, he is tracked to a field where a girl is cutting *chia*, a plant used in making a favorite Mexican beverage. The girl recognizes him, and, hearing his pursuers not far away, she hides him under the pile of *chia* stalks which she has just cut, in time to put the baffled soldiers on a wrong track. It was during these days of suffering and peril that the young Tezcucan took the name of Nezacoyuhuatl ("Hungry Fox"), which he afterward made so famous as that of a warrior, a philosopher, a lawgiver and a poet.

When by the help of their Aztec confederates the Tezcucans regained their ancient power, Hungry Fox beautified their city on the lake-side until in splendor and extent it must have equaled the grandest cities of Central America. The remains of one of his palatial dwellings—which was said to have contained three hun-

dred rooms—have furnished an inexhaustible quarry for the churches and the public buildings erected by the Spaniards near its site. In one of the magnificent parks laid out under the direction of this chief the humble name he bore was frequently set forth in the lean figure of a coyote, or fox, carved in stone. He never seemed to be weary of picturing those days of trial when he was a hunted fugitive in the land over which he became chief ruler. Some of his poems, preserved to this day in the writings of his great grandson, remind us of the book of Ecclesiastes; they have the same sad refrain: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" With all that the world could give, Hungry Fox found it to be an unsatisfying portion. To him the past was not more full of sorrow than the future was of doubt, and in the chilling shadow of both the present had no true light or peace.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *A GATHERING CLOUD.*

CENTURIES had passed since Feathered Serpent sailed from Mexico to his unknown home in the East. His was probably the last pale face seen in that part of the continent until Columbus, searching for a gateway to India, coasted along Honduras in 1504.

It will be remembered that on this voyage the Spanish vessels, which had stopped at an island to fill their water-casks, saw a large canoe coming landward, probably on the same errand. It brought a trading-party of Indians from some point on the mainland. The first glimpse which Europeans had of Mexico was gained from the account which these voyagers gave. For fifteen years, or more, however, no effort was made to follow up this clue. Meanwhile, the Mexican traders went home with news which must have thrilled every gossip in all that region. Not one of their party had seen a white man before. The bearded sailors, their white-winged ships, the strange goods offered in barter, together with the fact that they hailed from the East, stirred anew the hope cherished by many thoughtful Mexicans that Feathered Serpent was about to fulfill his promise to return, gather his followers about him, and once more become the leader and the benefactor of their long oppressed and divided people.

For more than one hundred years had the Aztecs been preying on other tribes. There was scarcely a tribe south of the table-land, from the Gulf to the ocean and as far down the coast as Yucatan, but was feeding this proud people with its best products. Field and fishery, mine and workshop, were subject to the cruel exactions of a resident officer appointed by one or all of the confederate tribes. Most cruel tyranny of all, the flower of the youth were yearly claimed for sacrifice upon the altars of these allies. We hear of a few tribes who would not bow their necks to the yoke. Brave Tlascala—a little republic penned up in the mountains between Mexico and the sea—went for years without cotton, salt or cacao because she could not produce these articles herself and would not admit confederate traders lest they should prove to be spies. Feeble remnants of several other tribes still existing can proudly boast that no banner of Montezuma's ever floated above their land.

Old prophecies about Feathered Serpent now loomed up as never before. There were storms and floods, earthquakes and meteors, which gloomily heralded his approach. One night in 1517, when there was no earthquake, nor even a storm in the air, Lake Tezcuco rose suddenly in a great wave and flooded the city. Comets glared in the sky, and once a strange untimely light in the east seemed the forerunner of a new sun. Would not the Fair God—as Feathered Serpent was called—he angry when he came back and found his altars polluted with blood and his name made hateful to those who were groaning under the burdens imposed upon them by the Aztec religion?

Whether or not Montezuma, the Aztec "chief-of-men" in those days, had a part in thus misrepresenting Feathered

Serpent we cannot tell. When chosen by his peers to fill this high office, he was a priest in the great temple, and as such he must have known that Feathered Serpent had forbidden the loathsome and cruel rites which through Aztec influence had become common. As a priest he was well read, also, in the ancient history of his people. Nothing disheartened him so much as prophecies about Feathered Serpent. He believed that he was a man of flesh and blood like himself, whose followers might be expected to come again at any time to Mexico to fulfill his promised mission. If they did, a revolution was certain. Montezuma would no longer be "chief-of-men" and Aztec power would be humbled. These thoughts filled the chief with the deepest gloom. Rumors of the visit of Columbus to America and the presence of Spanish colonists in Cuba were probably afloat, and had reached the ears of the ever-vigilant council of chiefs. A coast-guard was on duty night and day, and fleet-footed couriers were ready to bear the news of an invasion to the proud city on the lake.

None were so frequently consulted in the council as were the shaggy-haired priests. Their night-watches in the towers of the great *teocallis* gave them the best possible opportunity of reading the stars. In no other way could the dark-minded Mexicans come so near to Him who made them as by studying the movements of the celestial bodies. But every sign now foretold disaster. In vain the soothsayers went through long fasts and cruel penances. The gods did not hear, though prayers to them were mumbled with tongues torn and bleeding with the thorns worn to gain their favor.

Not long before the arrival of the white men a priestess, a maiden nearly related to Montezuma, professed to



have had a vision of tall-masted ships approaching the shore, and of pale-faced, bearded men in strange clothing landing on the coast with instruments of warfare unknown to her people. But beyond her ken, far over the blue waves which Feathered Serpent crossed in his retreat, a great nation was unconsciously preparing for the conquest of Mexico.

The earliest Spanish colonies were planted on several of the West India Islands. Every ship brought a horde of needy adventurers. In their insatiable thirst for gold they trod down the gentle, indolent race they found there until not one was left. The most cruel slavery prevailed wherever a Spaniard set his foot.

As the islanders melted away before their taskmasters, slave-hunting expeditions were fitted out by the planters to ravage other islands in search of new victims. It was during one of these slave-hunts that the Gulf of Mexico was discovered. Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, a Spanish planter in Cuba, was on his way to the Bahamas after a cargo of slaves, when a fearful storm drove the vessel far out of her course toward the west. After tossing about for three weeks he landed on the coast of Yucatan. He found there a people very different from the islanders among whom he had lived. The adventurers landed near a large Indian town. The inhabitants came out to see them, and seemed at first very friendly. But this proved to be a stratagem to draw the visitors into a better position for the battle which the natives intended to bring on. They had heard of the Spaniards and their white-winged ships, and probably of their slave-hunts, and determined to have nothing to do with the treacherous palefaces. In the fight which they provoked with the Spaniards it was proved that the

natives were no match for the invaders, though they succeeded in wounding several of them with the darts and the flint-edged wooden swords which they carried. De Cordova took to his boats again with his men, and, keeping in sight of land, went north and landed in Campeachy. The people here, though more civil than their neighbors down the coast, were no better pleased to see the strangers.

Here were well-built temples of stone. The priests, in long white garments, came with censers full of burning coals in their hands. On these they dropped sweet-scented gums, and swung them before their visitors to perfume the air. Others had bundles of dried reeds, which they laid in order on the ground and set on fire, motioning that if their visitors did not go back to their vessels before those reeds were burned up it would be worse for them. They stood silently about the little fire, waiting with folded hands the departure of the intruders. This gentle hint was taken, or there would have been another battle—as there was not long afterward, when De Cordova landed at a large village called Potonchan. There were farmers living in large, substantial stone houses surrounded by cornfields. The Spaniards stopped here to fill their water-casks at a spring, when the natives attacked them, killing forty-seven, wounding others and taking five prisoners. Five of De Cordova's men died on board ship, and he himself lived but a few days after his return to Cuba.

This expedition brought back a good report of the country. De Cordova had kidnapped two of the young men of Yucatan, clad in their native costume. Nothing interested his Spanish neighbors, however, so much as the ornaments of wrought gold which these savages wore.



INDIGENOS OF NORTHERN GUATEMALA.

They imagined that this new "island" was full of mines of gold, silver and precious stones. They had been disappointed in the mineral riches of Cuba; here was the opening of which they had dreamed. The governor of Cuba, Velasquez, lost no time in fitting out an expedition to go in search of these treasures. He gave the command to Juan de Grijalva, his nephew, who set sail May 1, 1518, for this new field of conquest. If the Indians received them peaceably, Grijalva had gay cloths



and trinkets for presents and barter; if they were hostile, he was provided with guns and ammunition.

Grijalva's fleet was caught in a storm. After beating about for a while he was borne on its strong wings to Cozumel, a small island south of the north-eastern corner of Yucatan. He soon crossed over the mainland and went to Potonchan, where the farmers had so roughly handled De Cordova and his men. This second visit ended in a second battle, in which the Spaniards were victorious.



As the voyagers sailed westward along the coast for several hundred miles they saw with admiring eyes pleasant villages surrounded with luxuriant trees and wide-spreading fields. The houses and temples, so lofty and white in the distance, reminded the strangers of their native land, and they called the whole region New Spain—a name it bore on European maps for many a year.

While Grijalva was on the borders of Mexico the great council of the Aztec nation sent some of their police-officers down to the coast to interview the visitors. They could communicate with each other only by signs, it is true, but in this pursuit of knowledge under difficulties both parties were deeply impressed. The Aztecs gave Grijalva to understand that they came by the orders of Montezuma, a great chief who lived some distance from Tabasco, to the north-west. This is the first mention in European history of the now-famous chief, Montezuma.

Touching at San Juan d'Ulua, the Spaniards saw a temple where bloody remains showed that human sacrifices had just been offered. This sickening sight stirred up their religious zeal and reminded them that the conversion of the savages to Christianity should be one great object in their journey to the West.

As soon as possible after his nephew's return Governor Velásquez prepared to follow up his expedition with one which should bring more glory to Spanish arms and more gold into his own pockets. Grijalva had done so much better as an explorer than he had done as a soldier that he was displaced and the command given to Hernando Cortez, who had been one of the conquerors of Cuba in 1511, and was now master of a fine plantation. He was young, handsome, enterprising and popular; recruits flocked to his standard, and six ships were



soon fitted out. One hundred and fifty of Grijalva's followers enlisted under Cortez, besides other volunteers numbering six hundred men. While in Trinidad the soldiers were set to work to quilt their jackets with cotton, which grew in great abundance around the place. This was a fashion borrowed from the Indians, and served a good purpose in warding off the arrows used in battle. Hard fighting was expected, but little did the busy army of quilters dream of the bloody struggle before them, or how great and far-reaching would be its consequences.

The instructions given by the Spanish authorities to their military leaders in the New World were such as would suit an army of crusaders. Such, in fact, the invaders were, though their zeal for Christianity spent itself in forcing the pagans to bow to crosses and images and to accept the pope as lord of lords. This potentate had kindly divided all the world outside of Europe between his faithful children the king of Spain and the king of Portugal. Several popes had given to the latter the undiscovered world from Cape Bojador, in Africa, to India. On the 4th of May, 1493, Alexander VI. published a bull in which he drew an imaginary line from the north pole to the south pole one hundred leagues west of the Azores, giving to Spain all that lay west and to Portugal all that lay east of it. With a commission from his king to take possession of such an inheritance, and one from Rome to convert all the heathen, each soldier felt himself to be a Heaven-sent missionary, and, however wicked he might otherwise be, his good work for the Church would atone for all his sins and secure for him at last a seat in paradise. The flag of the expedition showed that it was going on a religious errand. On a ground of white and blue was a red cross surrounded with flames of fire. Its



PRESENT INHABITANTS OF MÉRIDA, YUCATAN.

motto, translated, was, "Friends, let us follow the cross; in that sign we shall conquer."

After a solemn celebration of the mass and a devout prayer to St. James, the patron saint of Cortez, the expedition sailed for Mexico, February 18, 1519, in six ships, the largest of which were only from seventy to eighty tons burden. The fleet took the route to Yucatan, intending to creep westward along the shore until the domain of the great Indian chief was reached. Two priests, Olmedo and Juan Diaz, accompanied the army; the latter had been over the ground before with Grijalva. Both were very much in earnest about their missionary work.

The first attempts seem to have been more successful than some which followed. On the island of Cozumel was a large temple to which pilgrims came from long distances. Near it stood a huge stone cross which from the earliest times had been adored as the god of rain. Cortez began his work of reform in this holy place. As but very little could be done in the way of preaching, on account of ignorance of the language, Cortez gave the natives an object-lesson by ordering his men to pull down the gods enshrined in the temple.\* The people shuddered at his impiety, groaned and wrung their hands, expecting that fire would come down from heaven to punish this sacrilege. Then, finding that no such result followed, they yielded after a slight resistance, and even helped the soldiers to pull down the old idols, whose impotency had been made so plain, and to put up the saints and the Virgin in their places. This done, they began to burn incense before the new gods and to offer

\* The ruins of this temple are still to be seen on this now-deserted island.

corn, fruits and quails, and asked Cortez to leave with them a teacher who could instruct them in this new religion.

Two of the natives of Yucatan had been taken to Cuba by Grijalva, and through them it appeared that several Christian captives were somewhere on the mainland. Cortez sent a ship after these men, and one of them was rescued. This was Geronimo de Aguilar, afterward interpreter to the army.



## CHAPTER XII.

### *NEW SPAIN.*

THE work accomplished by the army since leaving Cuba might well encourage Cortez to hope that his expedition, so far as missionary work was concerned, would be entirely successful. The idols of Cozumel, that famous heathen shrine, had been demolished, the Virgin and saints had been set up in their places, and the people had consented to sacrifice to them rather than to their old gods.

Leaving this hospitable place, the fleet sailed for Tabasco. Grijalva's reception here not long before had been very cordial, but the natives seemed to have changed their minds after he had gone. They eyed the Spaniards suspiciously through the loopholes of a strong timber wall which surrounded their town, and took all night to consider the polite request which Cortez sent, to be allowed to land to get water and provisions. Meanwhile, the women and the children had been stealthily carried to a safe place in the mountains, and the warriors of the tribe rallied to defend the place.

Finding that he was not welcome in the town, Cortez landed a short distance below it, on a small wooded island. Here, on a great ceyba tree, he made three cuts with his sword, to signify that he had taken possession of the country for his sovereign and the pope of Rome. The



next morning the natives came in several boats to this spot, bringing as a gift fowls, fruit and vegetables, with a request from the chiefs that the visitors would "take these things and go away, never to trouble their country any more."

"It is shameful in you to leave us to perish with hunger and thirst," said Aguilar.

"You are strangers to us," replied the Indian spokesman; "your faces and your voices are frightful to us. We do not want any of you in our houses. If you need water, dip it up out of the river, or dig wells as we do."

"Tell them," said Cortez to Aguilar, "that we shall never go away without seeing their town. I have been sent here by the greatest lord in the world, and I cannot return without a full account of this country. If they do not receive me as a friend, I shall commend myself to God and fight them."

"You had better not boast in a country which does not belong to you," retorted the chief. "As to entering our town, we shall never permit it; we will kill you all first."

Both parties now prepared for battle. The Indians came out with defiant yells. Although evidently terrified at the roar of the guns and the sight of "four-footed, two-headed beasts" (as they called the horses and their riders), they fought bravely until they were attacked on the land-side of the town, when they fled. Cortez and his men slept that night in the spacious temple.

After another attempt to dislodge the invaders, the Indians came bringing a tribute of provisions, gold and a number of victims for sacrifice, in token that they had given up the contest. While they were in the camp some of the horses stabled near by began to neigh. The

Indians, very much frightened, asked anxiously what they said, supposing that these strange creatures were gifted with speech. Some wag of a soldier replied,

“The horses are angry because your people have been fighting their masters.”

Upon this, the simple-minded natives made a humble apology to the animals, offering them flowers and turkey-hens to eat.

As the army was in Tabasco over Palm Sunday, Cortez took occasion to give these heathen people a lesson in Christianity. He marched his men in solemn procession through the streets, each soldier bearing a palm-branch in his hand. The scene ended on the high platform of the temple. Here, in view of the awestruck multitude, the idols were taken down and a Virgin and Child put in their sacred places. The priests then celebrated mass and baptized the natives who had been given to them as tribute.

A more cordial welcome awaited the fleet at its next landing on the coast of Mexico. The place of landing received from Cortez the name of San Juan d'Ulua. The people flocked to the beach and with smiles and gestures invited the ships to land. Before the anchor could be dropped two canoes were alongside the flagship with a message from the “governor.” The new comers asked to see the leader of the squadron; and when shown into his presence, they bowed low and said,

“Teuthile has sent to ask what people you are, what is your business here and what he can do for you.”

The language was so different from that which Aguilar had learned in Yucatan that it was necessary to keep up the conversation by signs. With the help of a good supper, it was not very hard to make the messengers under-

stand that the Spaniards were friendly and would call on their master the next day.

Cortez landed on Good Friday, April 21, 1519. With the help of their Cuban slaves and the natives the army were soon sheltered in booths and tents, while a great cross of wood was raised in the centre of the camp. The people, determined to see all that was going on, began to put up huts for themselves, brought beds, provisions and cooking-utensils, and prepared to stay while the great show lasted. Many a dainty dish cooked in native style found its way into the Spanish camp from the ovens and the kettles of these thrifty Indian dames. Yet Cortez ordered that a strict watch should be kept against Indian treachery—a precaution which the lawless character of many of his own men rendered necessary.

Tenthile did not wait for the promised visit from Cortez. He was a representative of the Aztec council—probably one of their collectors of tribute—and he knew that it was his duty to look well after these strangers. He came into the camp the next morning with a number of attendants, some of whom were porters laden with provisions and other gifts for the visitors. He paid his respects to Cortez by burning incense before him, and little straws which had been touched with his own blood. In return for the rich ornaments in gold and silver and feather-work which he received, Cortez gave a robe of silk, a glittering necklace of glass, curious beads, scissors, mirrors and articles made of iron and wool—materials of which the Mexicans knew nothing.

So far it had not been necessary to use words, but now there might have been awkward pauses but for a conversation which was observed between one of the deputy's attendants and Marina, an Indian girl who had been given,

among other articles of tribute, to the Spaniards at Tabasco. On inquiry, it was found that this girl was an Aztec by birth, of the tribe Teuthile represented, a chief's daughter, who after her father's death had been sold by her mother, and had been taken south to Tabasco. She was the first person baptized at Tabasco, and was thus the first nominal Christian Indian in all America. She soon brought Cortez and Teuthile into conversation, and afterward became chief interpreter between her people and their conquerors.

It was on Easter Sunday that this first visit of the Aztecs to the Spanish camp took place. Cortez and his men, having first attended mass, invited their Indian guests to a Spanish dinner.

As they were viewing the camp Teuthile saw a gilt helmet belonging to Cortez, and expressed a wish that Montezuma might have one like it. Cortez immediately handed it to him, saying,

"Take it to your master, and may he soon return it to me full of his gold! I wish to compare it with some we have in Spain."

The helmet was not the only thing sent to Montezuma on that eventful day. Some of the Spanish officers, observing a group of Aztecs busy in one corner, went to see what they were doing, and were surprised to find that they were official reporters getting up the despatches which their chief was obliged to send to Mexico. Pencil in hand, these men were sketching the camp, the Spanish soldiers in their helmets and coats of mail, the horses—in gala-array, to do honor to the occasion—the black-throated guns, the tall-masted ships riding at anchor not far away, with many other things which they did not comprehend, but which gave the Mexican



council an exact idea of the numbers and the probable strength of these visitors.

Here was a fine opportunity for Cortez. He determined that these despatches should make a sensation such as was never before known in all Mexico. He ordered out his men for a full-dress parade. The drums beat and the bugles sounded an alarm. Instantly the troops formed in order of battle, and the horses, inspirited not only by the music, but by the roar of the cannon, pranced about, while the heavy shot, aimed at the dense forest back of the camp, splintered the tree-branches like thunderbolts from the sky. Some of the Indians fell to the earth and cowered in the dust, while others took to their heels. A chieftain's dignity was for the moment forgotten in that wild rush for the woods. All that the Aztecs had ever heard of gods descending to the earth in human form was now revived. Had not three hundred of them just arrived and taken possession of the country? The effect which Cortez desired having been produced, he soothed his terror-stricken guests with gentle tones and reassuring smiles, while Marina, who had heard the guns at Tabasco, did what she could to quiet their fears, telling them they were safe from the power of these terrible black monsters, which were now in the hands of their friends. When the confusion was over and the painters were at work again on their despatches, they had some new and startling facts to report, and perhaps nothing more so than an Aztec stampede.

In a few days ambassadors from the City of Mexico made their appearance in camp with a splendid array of presents and a message from Montezuma. They said he did not want the white men to brave the dangers and fatigue of the long road to Mexico, neither did it suit the



dignity of his office to come and see the strangers. The presents he had sent would express his good-will, and he desired that they might soon return with safety to their own country.

If anything more was needed to excite the army to press on and examine the treasures of Mexico for themselves, the gifts just brought to their camp from that wonderful city over the mountains would be all that was necessary. The helmet sent to Montezuma was returned at this time filled with gold, as Cortez had requested.

A troop of Indian servitors had spread mats on the ground and piled thereon in great heaps the goods they had brought. Among them were cotton mantles plaided in gay colors. Others were shaggy on the outside, with a white lining, woven in one thickness; enough garments of this description were given to clothe Cortez and all his men. There were also deerskin shoes embroidered with gold thread and having white and blue soles, gilded shields adorned with brilliant feathers and seed-pearls, crowns of feathers and gold mitres set with precious stones in curious patterns, rich plumes fretted with gold and pearls, fans in magnificent variety, golden fishes, birds, animals, sea-shells of gold and silver, so skillfully wrought as exactly to imitate these productions of nature, the feathers, skins and hair being superior to any European workmanship. The most remarkable objects in this collection were two large wheels, or disks, one of gold and the other of silver, representing the sun and the moon. Both were formed of plates of these metals, on which animals and other objects in nature were wrought in raised figures and exquisitely finished. These were Aztec calendars, representing their divisions of time,

and were worth two hundred and twenty thousand dollars. When these articles were sent to Spain, they were accompanied by four Mexican chiefs and two native women. These appeared before the emperor Charles V. dressed in their native costume. The warriors had jewels set in gold hanging from their ears and lips—a fashion which the Spanish courtiers thought very unbecoming in men, but one which these Indians considered altogether ornamental. This exhibition took place in one of the northern cities in Spain. The emperor, after questioning about the climate, was considerate enough to send his visitors to the warmest corner of Spain, where they need not be exposed to sudden changes of temperature.

Montezuma's gifts only whetted the Spaniards' appetite for gold. However, the next embassy from Mexico, which came in a few days, brought more gifts, but a firm refusal from the council of chiefs to allow the army to approach any nearer to the city.

That evening, as the sun sank behind the woods and the Aztec officials were preparing to leave, the bell rang for vespers. There was a sudden dispersion of the group which always gathered about the presents. Every man hurried to the large wooden cross which had been set up in camp, and, kneeling on the sand, began to pray with the most ostentatious devotion. So religious a people as the Aztecs could not fail to understand such movements, although they did not know what god was addressed. Father Olmedo told them that the chief object of this visit of Europeans to their coast was to bring to its people a knowledge of the one true God and Jesus Christ, whom he had sent to be the Saviour of the world, showing them, at the same time, an image of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus. When the address was finished,

this image was formally presented to the Aztec chiefs, with the request that they would set it up in their temple instead of those of the bloodthirsty gods which they worshiped. The Aztecs accepted this gift very gravely, thinking, perhaps, it was not safe to dispute with preachers who could back their arguments with horses and cannon.

The next morning the Spanish sentinel, when he looked in the direction of the Indian huts by which the camp was surrounded, found that they were all deserted; the natives had stolen away in the night. The venders of fruit, vegetables and poultry on which the army had depended for its supplies had vanished, and the invaders were left between the sea and the woods with no certain prospect of sustenance from either. The outlook was very gloomy. The low, hot, unhealthy beach where they were encamped became a place of graves for the Spaniards. Many an ambitious adventurer was laid under the shadow of those tall trees while they were there. The survivors became more and more discontented and despondent.

Cortez resolved not only to seek a better situation, but, when it was found, to build a city which would serve as a base of supplies for his army and show the people of the country that he had come to stay. Most of his men had but one idea: they had come to make what money they could in a short visit, and to go back to Cuba with their spoils. Cortez, who had heard of the rich and prosperous tribes in the interior, believed he had only to cross the mountains rising behind the camp like a wall to reach a land of fabulous wealth and fertility. He determined not to wait for any invitation from Montezuma, but to push his way to the capital, see the famous chief in his

own palace, bring him into subjection to the pope and the king of Spain, convert the people to the true faith, settle the country, and, best of all, turn into the coffers of his own land the stream of gold which he believed to be flowing into those of Mexico. He saw that the greatest difficulty would be to bring his own army so to appreciate the grandeur of such an enterprise as to forget personal ambition in this splendid conquest for Church and State. His first step was to send a party northward along the coast to explore the country, and to find, if possible, a good harbor and a navigable river which would furnish a path into the interior. After an absence of three weeks his men came back with the report that, although they could find no good harbor, they saw a spot sheltered by a high rock where two rivers emptied into the Gulf. There was plenty of fine timber, good stone for building, pasture for cattle and tillable lands. Cortez decided to send his vessels up to this point with the stores, while he, with four hundred men and the horses, went by land.

Before camp was broken five Indian visitors came in one morning who quite turned the current of thought for the homesick men and made it much easier for Cortez to carry out his plans. In dress, manner and appearance these Indians were quite different from any the Spaniards had seen, although they were red like other Indians, with straight black hair. But their faces were curiously decorated with gold-leaf, put on in patches, and bright blue stones and gold rings in ears and nostrils. Two of these five men understood enough of the Aztec language to tell the girl Marina that they were Totonacs, of a powerful tribe at Cempoalla, a place twenty-five miles distant toward the north. Not long before the arrival of the



Spaniards this tribe had been beaten in battle by the Aztecs, and the heavy tribute exacted from them by the victors was a great grievance. Their distress at this particular time was very evident. They spoke bitterly of children who had just been claimed for sacrifice on Aztec altars, and seemed very anxious to throw off the intolerable burdens which had been laid upon them. Would these powerful white men come to their own country and become their allies?

Nothing could have pleased the wily Spaniard better than such a proposal. He had supposed that the Aztecs were a united people, and that Montezuma, seated on an imperial throne, had only to lift his sceptre for an obedient nation to prostrate itself before him. But here, ripe for revolt, was a tributary people that he could by skillful management separate from Mexico and use as the thin edge of the wedge which would finally disrupt the Aztec empire.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### *CEMPOALLA TO TLASCALA.*

THE road to Cempoalla lay through luxuriant groves of cocoa and palm trees, and then amid beautiful meadows alive with butterflies and birds. Flowering vines in a gay tangle clambered aloft, festooning the trees and loading the air with palm and spicery. As the Spaniards passed they saw on the face of nature one of those cruel blots of war—the blackened ruins of a little hamlet which had just been burned. Cempoalla was only twelve miles from their new campground, and was a city surrounded by well-kept gardens and orchards.

In one of the suburban villages through which they passed the Spaniards were met by twenty of the leading men of Cempoalla, who came bringing refreshments from their chief. Here the road was lined with crowds eager to see the strange creatures who seemed to these simple folk to have dropped among them from the moon. The men wore large mantles; the women were modestly dressed in long white or parti-colored cotton robes reaching from neck to ankle. They brought wreaths of wild flowers to hang about the horses' necks and to strew in the path, as was their custom when welcoming home their own braves. Both men and women were very much bejeweled. Necks and noses, ears, lips,

arms and ankles, had that profusion of glittering ornaments which rude races so much admire.

As the soldiers made their way through the crowd some horsemen riding in advance came dashing back with news. They had been near enough to look within the walls of Cempoalla, and saw there houses of burnished silver most dazzling to behold. In the glowing sunlight the white stucco of which they were built gave the buildings a glistening appearance which the excited cavaliers thought was due to a plating of some precious metal. On a nearer view of the place they compared it to Seville, one of the most beautiful cities of Spain, and named it thus without further delay.

An immense white building with loopholed towers stood in the market-place, and in this the army was invited to take up its quarters. Here the hospitable dames of Cempoalla made ready a good supper, which they spread on the floor for their guests. Clean mats for bedding were brought in abundance, and with these attentions the Indians politely withdrew, leaving their visitors to dispose of themselves for the night. After setting a strong guard the tired soldiers lay down to rest surrounded by what they estimated was a population of sixty thousand Indians.

The next morning the chief came to pay a visit of state to the new comers. He was led into the presence of Cortez, supported under each arm by a chief and followed by a company of servitors bringing rich presents. Cortez returned the visit in due form the next day. The conversation soon turned upon the late political events in Mexico. The chief complained bitterly of Aztec oppression and eagerly sought an alliance with the Spaniards.

Nothing since he left Cuba had given Cortez so much.

ORIZABA, AS SEEN FROM THE MEXICO AND VERA CRUZ RAILROAD.



hope of conquering Mexico as this story of a house divided against itself. He had modern experience, as well as scriptural authority, for believing that in this condition of things Montezuma's power could be overthrown. But he was politic enough to conceal his design of conquest under the veil of religion. He explained at length and very earnestly that he had come to Mexico on



a missionary errand ; he wished to set up among the people the true religion and to abolish human sacrifice. On his way to Cempoalla he had passed a temple where bloody human offerings had just been made, and the indignation of the soldiers over the dreadful sight thus presented was still burning ; and had the general followed their advice, it is probable that these priestly butchers of the tribe would never have taken knife in hand again.

After enjoying Cempoallan hospitality for a few days the army took up the line of march to their new encampment, near the site of their proposed city. This was on



the seacoast, only twelve miles from Cempoalla and in the country of the Totonacs. The whole tribe, it appeared, were as ready as the people of Cempoalla to throw off the hated Aztec yoke. Strengthened by the presence of their powerful visitors, they refused to pay the taxes then due. Still further to curry favor with the Spaniards, they went vigorously to work to help build the new town. Stone, lime and timber were to be brought to its site, and hands were needed to rear the walls of what must have been, when the cannon were mounted, an almost impregnable fortress.

Meanwhile, Teuthile's late despatches had made a great stir in the City of Mexico. Every movement in the Spanish camp had been stealthily noted long after Indians had been ordered to leave the neighborhood. Reporters lurking in the woods had pictured the fast-increasing graves on the beach, the vessels departing for the north with part of the forces, and, what was most of all to be dreaded, that visit from their enemies the fierce Totonacs. All this, with the march along the shore toward the Totonacan capital, had been pictured faithfully and sent by express to Mexico. How to break this league between their tributary tribe and the Spaniards was the question brought before the perplexed council. Supposing that, like Indians, these people from over the sea would be satisfied with tribute and would go away to leave them to manage their own affairs, they resolved to try what effect gold and other costly presents would have upon them. Two of Montezuma's nephews, with a brilliant array of other chiefs, now set out for the camp to spread before Cortez another magnificent presentation of gifts.

About the same time all Cempoalla was thrown into



a flutter of excitement by a demand from the council of Mexico for twenty young men and maidens to be sacrificed on the high altar there; this was intended as a punishment for daring to entertain the strangers without permission. Cortez saw his opportunity; he ordered his new allies to seize these messengers and put them in prison. The poor Cempoallans shrank in terror, not daring to offer such an affront to their haughty Aztec masters. On the other hand were these mysterious strangers, who might crush them while professing to shield them from their oppressors. But Cortez was firm. Would they break with their Aztec masters or with him? Of the two evils, the puzzled Cempoallans chose what seemed to be the least: they resolved to throw themselves on the mercy of a Spanish rather than a Mexican conqueror, and the surprised tax-collectors were soon thrust behind prison-bars. But they did not gnash their teeth with rage there very long, for Cortez, unknown to his allies, contrived to set them free that night, got them on board of one of his ships, and took them to a point where they could land with safety and speed back to Mexico to tell their story to the council, while, at the same time, he made a bid for Aztec friendship by thus delivering them.

While the Totonacs were thus dependent on Cortez to shield them from Aztec vengeance, Cortez determined to bring them into the true Church; he therefore took an opportunity to pay them a religious visit. He first tried by smooth words to persuade them to give up their idols. Finding that these would not avail, he impatiently ordered fifty of his men to mount the steps of the temple and demolish the idols with their pikes. The angry chief stormed and threatened that if this order was carried

out it would call down on their heads the vengeance of every god in Mexico. But Cortez coolly reminded him that the Aztecs would be glad to become allies of the Spaniards, and that if the Totonacs were not very civil to him he would leave them to settle the old score with their former masters without any help from him. This threat silenced the poor chief, but the people were furious. The priests called loudly on them to arise and defend their gods. They ran about in the crowd with wildly-streaming hair, beating their breasts in rage and despair.

As usual, Cortez improved this circumstance. He now ordered his men to seize the chief and the leading priests, and, taking them apart, he gave them to understand that if they did not quiet the mob the city would soon be too hot to hold them. In order to save their own lives, they were thus obliged to check the excited multitude, and actually to aid the soldiers to pile up the wooden gods, with all their finery, and to burn them in the public square. With what groans and lamentations this was done can better be imagined than described. The soldiers next took the temple in hand. Walls and floor, foul from disgusting worship, were soon cleansed and some bright new images set up in the empty shrine. Father Olmedo then gave the people a lesson in the worship due the idols of Rome just introduced to them; he ordered the priests to take off their black tunics and put on white, and, with candles in their hands, to join in the solemn procession which wound up the temple-stairs, never again to echo the footsteps of those who carried up human victims to die on that high altar. One thing at least was effected: the natives saw that the gods before whom they had trembled were unable to punish those who had thus insulted them, or to defend their worshipers.

While this work of converting the natives was going on, the revenue-officers, who had found their way back to Mexico after their escape from imprisonment in Cempoalla, had created quite a change in public sentiment by their report to Montezuma and his council. After all, the strangers were their friends, and the "water-houses," as they called the ships, were blessings in disguise. Full of gratitude and admiration, they were now sent back to their deliverers loaded with presents. The poor Totonacs, unable to understand this situation, were more than ever convinced that Cortez was not a human being, but the Fair God himself, and that he who could so transform the Aztecs was the only one who could protect them.

On the 16th of August, Cortez began his march toward Mexico. He had with him five hundred of his own countrymen, fifteen horses and six field-pieces, with several of the principal men of Cempoalla as hostages for the good behavior of the city in his absence. With the gifts from Mexico, many baggage-porters were needed, and these were furnished by the Totonacan allies. The rest of the army were left as a garrison in the new town, then little more than a fortress. One of the soldiers, an old and devout man, was charged with the duty of training the people in the religion they had so unwillingly adopted. Part of his business was to teach them how to make wax candles. The woods in the neighborhood of Cempoalla were rich in wild fruits and berries, one species of the latter furnishing wax in large quantities. Out of this tapers were made, to burn before the Virgin and Child. The industrious natives were quite pleased with this new employment, and worked diligently to provide the temple with lights far exceeding in brilliancy and steadiness

those of the fireflies with which they lighted their own houses. The new camp was now a regularly-organized colony of Spain. Cortez was chosen mayor, with his particular friends as subordinates—a precaution very necessary among these restless adventurers. The name of the city was very long and very religious, according to the fashion of the times. It was *Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*—"the Rich City of the True Cross."

Past experience had taught Cortez that either great difficulties or a life of idleness would make his men homesick. He saw that hardship and delay were inevitable, and feared that the sight of ships riding at anchor, ready to carry them back to Cuba, would be a temptation to them to desert; he therefore determined to cut off this opportunity by sinking all these vessels before he left the coast. He induced those who inspected the vessels to pronounce them worm-eaten and unseaworthy. The sails, the iron and the cordage were carefully taken out of them, and then a hole cut in the bottom of each ship sent it to the bottom, where no deserter could reach it.

The chief of Cempoalla sent his ally abundance of provisions for the journey, with two hundred porters and four hundred warriors. It was the rainy season, and all nature was rioting in a luxuriance of growth known only in this high tide of a tropical year. Field and forest were teeming with life. Where the latter was threaded by footpaths a tangled undergrowth disputed every inch of a way which was never wide enough for two travelers to walk abreast. Passing from these forests into the cultivated fields which surrounded every hamlet, the eye was gladdened by corn of such magnificent growth as completely to overtop the low-roofed houses in which most



of the people of the lowlands lived. The banana, the plaintain, manioc, cocoa, vanilla and other tropical fruits made this a home of plenty. The white-walled villages nestling in these fertile plains were often unseen by the traveler until he could look down upon them from some breezy terrace on the mountains.

The road took the army over some of the wildest passes. The steep side up which they clambered was here and there cleft by deep fissures; these often formed the bed of a torrent hurrying onward to the Gulf. Where the path crossed these ravines a log or a leaning tree bridged the yawning chasm, or a single arch spanned it at some dizzy height. Up, up, up these frightful steeps the long lines of men and horses wound, often in paths wide enough for only a single passenger. From different points upon the way their eyes took in some of the grandest landscapes in the world. Sunny plains stretched far below, sloping gently toward the Gulf. Here and there the white walls and the towers of some pueblo gleamed through the deep green of surrounding orchards or crowned a hilltop. It is not probable that the country was densely populated. There were no scattered farmhouses, the home of a single family, as with us, but hamlets where a number gathered for mutual protection.

Beyond this lookout place the army passed into a region of intense cold—that frigid zone which enwraps the world everywhere, if one only climbs skyward far enough to find it. Here the vapors from the Gulf, wafted westward against the frozen mountains, were condensed, and fell in a pitiless storm of sleet in which the troops perished. The thick garments of quilted cotton with which many had provided themselves at Trinidad were as great a protection

against the icy blast as against the Mexican arrows which they were intended to ward off, but the poor half-clad Cuban porters died by scores along the way. The soldiers, benumbed with cold and suffering with hunger and thirst, were three days dragging their heavy cannon over these mountains.

After leaving this dreary region the Spaniards came to a high valley on the mountain-side, where they found houses of hewn stone larger and better built than any they had yet seen in the country. Elegantly furnished apartments were put at their disposal by a chief whom Cortez styles "lord of the valley." When this man was asked if he was a subject of Montezuma, he drew himself up proudly and asked, "Who is not a subject of Montezuma?" as though he would say, "Is he not master of the world?" Cortez insisted that His Lordship should do homage to the king of Spain, demanding some gold as a token of his obedience.

This ceremony was easily understood by the Aztec. He consented to send to Montezuma this challenge from the white man, adding,

"If Montezuma commands me to do so, I will give you not gold only, but myself and all that I possess."

#### THE TLASCALANS.

Next to the Aztecs, no tribe makes such a figure in Mexican history as the Tlascalans, a race of bold and hardy mountaineers who inhabited elevated valleys between Mexico and the Gulf. Cortez had taken a road which led him near this region. He was advised by the Totonacs to secure the good-will of this tribe, and, if possible, to enter into league with it. For generations it had been at war with the Aztecs, and never once had

it been forced to pay tribute to its proud neighbors around Lake Tezcuco, although it had been completely hemmed in by them, so that Tlascala had become a little world by itself, without a single gate through which it dared to procure the products of the Mexican valley.

Cortez, who had ventured into the interior with but a handful of his own men, could not leave such a nest of warriors between him and his base of supplies on the coast. On the other hand, they might be made allies in case of war with the Aztecs. A visit to Tlascala was therefore resolved upon.

In the march to Tlascala the army came to a high battlemented wall twenty feet thick, nine feet high and six miles long, which, reaching from one mountain to another, defended one of the approaches to that country. This frontier wall was semicircular in one place and overlapped itself, making an indirect and easily-defended entrance. The stones of which this fortification was formed were so firmly cemented together that years afterward, when the Spaniards wished to level it to the ground—as they did everything that could keep alive a spark of national pride among the natives—it was found almost impossible to pry them asunder; so that the remains of these celebrated walls are to be seen to-day.

When the Spanish army marched to Tlascala, in August, 1519, this wall had not a single defender. A little way farther on the other side some Indians showed themselves, and fled without any notice of the signals of peace which Cortez caused to be made. As it afterward proved, these were scouts of a force of a thousand men, who came with loud cries of defiance and brandishing their weapons. They soon fled, and the Spaniards followed, supposing that these, like the other Indians, were terri-

fied with the guns and the horses. This was their first experience with a Mexican ambushade. They soon found themselves in a deep and narrow valley, surrounded by a surging mass of warriors, many of them clad in little more than paint and feathers, and all yelling as only savages can yell.

Cortez, with forty archers, thirteen horsemen and six cannon, pressed through this raging sea of enemies till he reached an open plain, where he made a stand and fought all day. Much injury was done to the savages, but the Spaniards did not lose a man. This would seem incredible but for the fact that in all their warfare these people risked everything in order to secure prisoners for sacrifice and to carry off their own slain and wounded from the battlefield. A dozen men would thus throw away their own lives in order to gain a single captive, and by the time those who thus fell were rescued it is easy to see that many more lives were forfeited.

In one of these Tlascalan battles two of the horses were killed. This fact was carefully concealed from the enemy, who, until they saw one of these creatures dead, supposed they were immortal like the gods. After their discovery of the truth one of these animals was cut up, and the pieces were sent to all the Tlascalans as an inspiring summons to come out and conquer their common foe.

The next day, having received reinforcements from his camp, Cortez sallied forth at daybreak to make an attack on the neighboring villages, five or six of which he burned, took four hundred prisoners, men and women, and fought his way back to his camp without loss.

An after-breakfast battle that same day was still more remarkable as described in Spanish history. An immense



army of Indians—estimated at one hundred and forty-nine thousand—attacked the temple where the Spaniards were entrenched, forced an entrance and had a hand-to-hand fight with the white men. There is no doubt that the Spaniards would have been beaten had not the Tlascalcan leaders disagreed among themselves. Seven days of such hard fighting was necessary to subdue the Tlascalans.

After the retreat of the natives they sent fifty of their braves with white badges to carry provisions to the Spanish camp in token of submission. It was noticed that these messengers were looking carefully about them, as if they were examining the defences of the place. The Cempoallans, understanding Indian tactics, warned Cortez, for they were sure these men were spies. A close cross-examination followed. One after another confessed at last that this visit to the camp was only part of a plot to surprise the Spaniards that night. One of their priests had said that in no other way could they get rid of these white men. They were, no doubt, children of the sun, and could be reached only when he had withdrawn his beams. The whole party had their hands cut off, and, thus cruelly maimed, they were sent back to Tlascala with the message that by night or by day, whenever they came, they would find the Spaniards ready to give them battle.

This punishment—so much worse than death to the Tlascalcan warrior—struck terror into all hearts. Long before the bleeding stumps could be shown to the council of Tlascala, Cortez was out upon another raid among the Indian villages. Supposing their plot would be successful, the warriors were hiding in the woods and thickets around the camp, and as soon as it was dark they began

to gather about it in crowds. The Spaniards sallied forth and so completely surprised them that they all fled. After a little rest the Spaniards again began their work of devastation, attacking every town around the hill on which they were encamped. In view of his success in this cowardly warfare, Cortez congratulated himself that God had interfered in his behalf, enabling him to destroy ten towns and many people.

During the hottest part of this week of battles in Tlascala another party of Aztecs came to the Spanish camp to make a formal offer of obedience to the great chief in Spain. It was not their intention to give up their customs, their government or their religion; that would mean the death of their tribe. The council had empowered them to make arrangements with Cortez as to the amount and the kind of tribute they should give. This point settled, they expected the satisfied strangers to leave them in peace.

The desire which Cortez continued to express to visit the country of the envoys perplexed them. Friends with the white man they could not be, but they would give of their treasures to avoid fighting. If they failed to keep their promise, then would it not be time enough to come with an army to punish them? Montezuma's message was very plain. "Our country is barren and poor," he said. "You will have to climb rugged mountains and brave many dangers in order to visit us. Do not come."

These messengers remained in the Spanish camp during a great part of the struggle with the Tlascalans and saw what these white men were capable of doing, and used their utmost endeavors to hinder the friendship which afterward sprang up between them and the Tlas-

calans. This want of harmony among the tribes suited Cortez exactly.

But, with all this success, the Spaniards felt themselves



to be in a desperate situation. Many of the men were ready to mutiny and leave Cortez to his fate. They were far from home, in the heart of an enemy's country ; and should they succeed in fighting their way back to their base of supplies at Villa Rica, they had no vessels to take them back to their own country in case the garrison had been overpowered by their treacherous neighbors, or, what was quite as possible, had given up because so weary of the ambitious schemes of their leader, whom many of them considered little better than a madman. But for a timely visit from the Tlascalcan chief Xicotencatl, it is likely that Cortez might soon have found himself without an army. This young man came one morning in a cloud of incense, touching the ground and lifting his hand to his head. It was easy to see that his proud spirit was still unbroken, although he acknowledged that his people for the first time submitted to a foe. From fear of treachery, the invitation he brought to the Spaniards to visit Tlascala was not accepted for a week. Other chiefs

now came to the camp, and their overtures seemed so

sincere that the army finally took the line of march for Tlascala.

This city was eighteen miles distant from the camp at Tzompach. The country abounded with high, level valleys, which at this time were fertile and well cultivated. As the Spaniards approached the city they noted with pleasure and admiration the beautiful white houses among the trees, the well-tilled land, the luxuriant harvests and the signs of thrift everywhere. It is said that the city of Tlascala had a market where thirty thousand people bought and sold every day. It was well supplied with meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, and bath-houses and barber-shops and a well-regulated police-force were found there.

The blind old chief, Xicotencatl the elder, anxious to know what the white man was like, felt the face of Cortez and fingered his beard and his armor, finally accepting him as a friend. Soon after this the poor old man embraced the Christian faith, in token of which a great cross was erected by his orders in the market-place of Tlascala. Scenes similar to those at Cempoalla would have been enacted here but for the protestations of Father Olmedo, who succeeded—in this instance, at least—in persuading Cortez to use sermons rather than swords in converting the people.

It was in Tlascala that Cortez first heard of the long-cherished hope of Feathered Serpent's return. These hunted and oppressed people were waiting for deliverance when the white men came, but, not being prepared as the Aztecs were, their sudden appearance on their frontier roused all the warlike instincts of the tribe.

The question of the white man's might once settled, the Tlascalans at once acknowledged his right to rule



over them, and from that time Cortez was very generally accepted as one who had come in fulfillment of prophecy. The democratic form of government universal throughout Mexico was so evident here that Tlascala was never called anything but a republic.



MEXICAN BASKET-SELLERS.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *HO FOR THE CAPITAL!*

THE Aztec chiefs who visited Tlascala were very anxious that Cortez should take Cholula on his way to visit Montezuma, if the Aztec council should consent that he might come to Mexico at all. They had hoped that the Totonacs and their Spanish allies would quarrel by the way, that the army would perish with hunger and cold as they crossed the bleak mountain-walls of their valley, or, should they survive these perils, that the Tlascalans would entrap and crush them in some of their deep valleys. But all these hopes had proved vain. Montezuma and his council were quaking with fear over the latest despatches from their envoys. The pictures they drew of sleeping villages attacked by a ruthless foe, of murder and pillage and fire, were only too familiar work with all Aztec reporters, but these white men had clothed war with new terrors. Marching in triumph from tribe to tribe, laying the thousands of Tobaseo under tribute, they had won allies in Cempoalla without a blow. Now even Tlascalan braves, after their proud ranks had been beaten down like grass in a hailstorm, were bowing under a yoke which all the armies of the confederacy had not been able to fasten upon them. Were they gods, or were they men like themselves? The wisest of their priests now declared

that it was the will of the gods that the white strangers should find their graves in Cholula; to Cholula, then, they must be enticed with a hint that the long-delayed invitation from the "chief-of-men" to visit Mexico might await them there.

Cholula, eighteen miles from Tlascala, was one of the sacred places of Mexico. It was the home of a rich and powerful tribe of merchants who had but lately broken friendship with the Tlascalans to become the allies of the Aztecs. Cortez resolved to pay a visit to the city, and fixed a day. This news caused great anxiety among the Tlascalans. It was very plainly their duty to accompany their allies to Mexico; it was quite as plain to them that the most dangerous road there would be that which should take them through Cholula.

"Do you not see," said the wary old Tlascalans to Cortez, "that no Cholulan chief has been to visit you, though the city is only eighteen miles away? Other tribes, which live much farther off, have sent their best men to seek your friendship; why have the Cholulans been so indifferent?"

With thanks for this warning, Cortez asked that messengers be sent to the Cholulan council to demand an explanation. The very cool answer which came to this demand provoked the general to send them at once a formal summons to come immediately and submit to him as the representative of the king of Spain, "the lord of the whole earth." If they refused, he said, he would march against them and destroy them as rebels. This arrogant message had its effect. The next day the Cholulan chiefs walked over to the camp to apologize for their neglect. To make the scene more impressive to these new visitors, Cortez had their speech recorded by a notary

and required them all to sign it as a fair statement of facts.

"Now," said he, "I am going back with you to Cholula, to see for myself if you have spoken the truth."

The Tlascalans again cautioned Cortez not to venture too far. No tribe in Mexico was more noted for cunning than were the Cholulans. Finding that he was bent on going, the whole native army offered to accompany him. Cortez allowed the Tlascalans to attend him until he was within six miles of Cholula, when he persuaded all but six thousand men to return until he was ready to go on to Mexico. He said that he was afraid the entrance of so large a body of armed Tlascalans would throw the city into a commotion.

The army of Cortez encamped for the night on the banks of a small stream; the next morning, in great numbers, the citizens poured out of Cholula to greet the strangers. The Cholulans were by far the best-dressed people the Spaniards had yet seen. The chiefs wore cloaks over their mantles; these were elegantly woven and embroidered, and were generally provided with pockets. Hundreds of priests in long black dresses and with flowing hair mingled with the crowd, chanting solemn temple-hymns and swinging fragrant censers as they walked. The women wore flowers in their dark hair, and came laden with wreaths to deck the horses, which here, as everywhere, created a fever of excitement.

The city of Cholula was situated in a beautiful and highly-cultivated plain, well wooded and watered by artificial canals. It was venerable with age. Its early records were probably lost when Mexican libraries were burned by order of the conquerors. Tradition said that it



had been the home of Feathered Serpent ages before. An elegant temple in his honor crowned the great pyramid which the Aztecs and kindred tribes found there when they entered the valley. It was now a great resort for pilgrims, who came in multitudes to worship at this ancient shrine.

The spirit of Feathered Serpent had, however, long ago died out of his worship. Here, where he had been best known and loved, his altars reeked with human blood. It is said that six thousand victims were yearly slaughtered in this city alone.

The wide, clean streets and massive houses were noted with great admiration by the army, who now entered the city. It contained about twenty thousand houses, and, as we have seen, these were always occupied by many related families. The population was probably about two hundred thousand.

A large temple with its surrounding courtyard was given to Cortez for the accommodation of his men, who, with the exception of the Tlascalans, were all quartered within the city walls. Provisions were sent to them, "although not in a bountiful manner," as Cortez complained. Every day the fare provided for the army grew worse. The Cholulans explained that corn was scarce, but those who looked out on the waving fields around them concluded that this was an excuse unworthy of so wealthy a people. It was noted, also, that the chiefs paid very few visits to the Spanish quarters. Their guests soon began to compare notes among themselves. Some had observed the loaded house-roofs here and there, where piles of stone could be hidden behind parapets or among the flowering plants with which they were often adorned. The watchful Totonacs, who had the liberty



PYRAMID OF CHOLULA.

of the city, noted, as they strolled about, signs of pitfalls familiar to an Indian's eye. The Tlascalans very naturally said, "Did we not tell you so?" It was Marina, however, who actually discovered the plot which many had suspected. She had found a friend among the women of Cholula, a chieftain's wife, who in her anxiety for Marina's safety warned her to leave the camp and take refuge with her. She hinted that the Aztecs were at hand, waiting to join the Cholulans in a massacre of the Spaniards and their allies, and that women, children and valuables were about to be sent out of the city.

Hearing this confirmation of his own fears, Cortez requested a meeting of the city council. He told them that he saw he had become a burden to them and that he had made up his mind to leave Cholula for Mexico the next day, and asked that they would furnish him with two thousand men to transport his artillery and baggage. After some consultation among themselves this request was granted. Cortez next sought an interview with the Aztec embassy and told them of the plot he had discovered, charging Montezuma with it. They feigned great surprise and declared that neither their chief nor the council knew anything about it; the fault lay entirely with the Cholulans. Cortez, although satisfied that they were deceiving him, affected to believe the Aztecs. At the same time, he kept them apart from the people of the city, lest his plan to take vengeance upon the latter should fail of execution.

That was a sleepless night for the Spanish general; his little army seemed to be standing over a magazine. They were in the heart of an enemy's country and surrounded by friends quite as capable of treachery as were the foes

he dreaded. There were also many among his own men who had no sympathy with his ambitious schemes ; these malcontents counseled a retreat to Tlascala. Others found fault that he had dealt so mildly with the Indians, and still others said that he had been foolhardy and had ruined the expedition by leading them into this dangerous place. Most of them, however, sided with their general, who thought a time had come to strike a blow which should for ever put a stop to Indian treachery. The next morning Cortez so posted his guns as to command the great avenues of the city and stationed a guard of picked men at the three entrances to his own quarters. The Tlascalans had orders to come to his assistance when a signal-gun should be fired.

It was still very early when some of the Cholulan chiefs came into the courtyard with the two thousand porters they had promised the day before, and these, with the Spanish soldiers on duty, soon crowded the place. Then, calling aside their leader, Cortez charged the Cholulans with the plot he had discovered. Small time was allowed for explanation, as the signal to fire on the unarmed crowd penned in the enclosure was immediately given to those who held the entrances. The noise within the courtyard attracted a furious mob outside, but they were mowed down by the guns, which swept the avenues. As the foremost fell others rushed on over the heaps of slain. The Tlascalans, who had been eagerly listening for the signal, now came pouring into the city and attacked the Cholulans in the rear. By the orders of Cortez his allies wore sedge-leaves on their heads, to distinguish them from the natives of Cholula and Mexico.

As usual in Mexican warfare, the battle raged most



fiercely around the temple, and on this awful day the great pyramid of Cholula became the centre of the storm which broke over the city. Many of the Cholutans rushed up its steep stairways and took refuge in the towers with which it was crowned. From thence they hurled stones, but with little effect, on the heads of the invaders who pressed up behind them. These tall towers, which were of wood, were soon wrapped in flames. The city was given up to pillage. The fierce Tlascalans captured scores of victims for their altars, and led them away to their camp, to be offered up to the gods in that feast which would mark their triumphal return to their own valleys.

Some of the Cholulan chiefs who had escaped implored Cortez to shield Cholula from the vengeance of his terrible allies. However foreign was his conduct from the spirit of Him in whose cause he professed to be engaged, there was something which led the poor Cholutans to trust in the white men rather than in those whose religion was one of vengeance. The efforts of Cortez to quell the uproar were in time successful. It is said that he prevailed on his allies to give up their captives. If this be true, they gave the highest proof of their regard for his wishes which was possible to a Mexican Indian. All the inhabitants but the chiefs who had been shut up were driven from the city. Many of the towers and houses were burned, and more than three thousand of the people had been killed.

Returning to his quarters, Cortez called his Cholulan prisoners to account. With one consent they excused themselves and blamed the Aztecs. If he would forgive them this time, they promised to be henceforth and for ever faithful subjects of the great lord across the sea.

Two of these chiefs were sent out to invite the people to come back to their homes, and, says Cortez, "the next day the whole city was filled with men, women and children in as much security as if nothing had occurred."

Many a fatherless family there was that sad day as the women and children who had fled for shelter to the mountains came flocking back to their desolate homes. Saddest of all were the black-robed priests who had escaped the general carnage. Now that the fight was over and the dead were buried, the Spanish general began his work of cleansing their temples and converting their flocks to the new religion. What was left of the great *teocallis* was turned into a Christian church. An immense cross was erected among the smouldering ruins, and, but for the wise counsel of Fathers Olmedo and Diaz, the war for conquest would have been followed by as fierce a crusade for the Church. Yet happy were the captives who were waiting their turn to be sacrificed. Every door of every cage was opened. If there was anything in all that troublous time which satisfied the Indians that Feathered Serpent had come again in the person of Cortez, it was this act of mercy. How strangely were the cruelties of that dark and bloody age in which he lived mingled with the fulfillment of that prophecy of "liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"!

Another embassy from Mexico showed what a fright events in Cholula had given to the Aztec council. They begged that the white men would not trouble themselves to come any farther, as they inhabited a cold and barren country and the people were poor; they would, however, supply their visitors with such provision as they could

spare. It is plain that from first to last the European idea of conquest never entered their minds; they supposed that Cortez persisted in coming because he was not satisfied with the amount of tribute they offered. It was not strange, therefore, that the representatives of these poverty-stricken tribes should come laden with more gifts for the conquerors. They had already poured enough of their treasure at the feet of the invaders to lure the most homesick man in the camp across the mountains, and every time they came the army were fired with new courage to seek a place where gold and gems were so plentiful. Besides their protest, the council sent an explanation of the part they had taken in the Cholula affair. They professed sincerely to deplore the treacherous conduct of their allies in that city, and said that their army had been sent to that neighborhood to quell some disturbances in two tributary tribes whose lands joined those of the Cholulans.

Cortez wisely forbore to express his doubts of Aztec sincerity; his face was now turned toward Mexico, and it was politic to show himself as friendly as possible toward the authorities there. He soothed the evident fears of his visitors, at the same time assuring them that he was certainly coming to visit their country.

And yet again the terror-stricken chiefs sent messengers over the gradually shortened way between their city and the Spanish camp. The burden of their story now was that Montezuma was anxious that Cortez should take a safe road on his inevitable journey.

This message reached the general on his way to Mexico. The army had come to a place where the road forked. One well-worn footpath was choked with trunks of prostrate trees and other rubbish which had

recently been put there by order of the Mexican council ; the other path was that which had been marked for the army as the best and safest for the horses. It is not strange that fresh treachery was suspected here. Finding that the road which the Indians had blocked up was the most direct, Cortez ordered his men to clear it of stones and of timber. They made short work of this, the Tlascalans especially laboring with a will to open a path toward the citadel of their lifelong enemies. The courage of the Totonacs, however, gave out at the last moment ; so, thanking them for their fidelity in the time of his greatest need, Cortez dismissed them with liberal rewards out of the abundance with which Montezuma had provided him.

The army now pressed on and up the highest of the great mountain-ranges on which are piled the central table-lands of Mexico. Cortez writes of it : " Eight leagues from the city of Cholula are two very lofty and remarkable mountains.\* In the latter part of August their summits are covered with snow, and from the higher a volume of smoke arises equal in bulk to a spacious house. It ascends above the mountain to the clouds as straight as an arrow, and with such force that, although a very strong wind is always blowing on the mountain, it does not turn the smoke from its course. As I wished to ascertain the cause of this phenomenon, as it appeared to me, I despatched ten of my companions, with several natives of the country for guides, charging them to ascend the mountain and find out the cause of that smoke. They went and struggled with all their might to reach the summit, but were unable, on account of the great quantity of snow which lay on the mountains, the whirl-

\* Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, both snow-clad all the year.

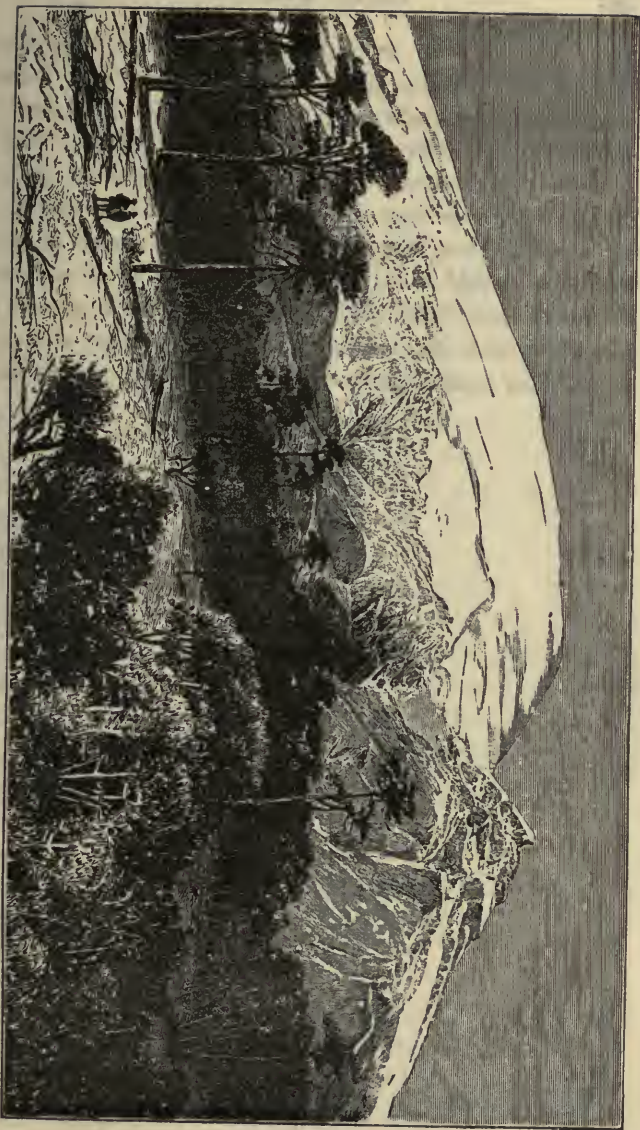


wind of ashes which swept over it and the insupportable cold."

From one of the dizzy heights on this burning mountain, Popocatapetl, the explorers saw an Indian trail winding down through the stunted shrubbery of a pass at their feet which seemed much more direct and easy than the one which the army had chosen. Wrapping some huge icicles in their blankets, to prove that they had actually been in this frigid zone, the party retraced their steps. After some conference with their Aztec leaders, it was decided to take the route just discovered.

A storm of rain and sleet was now sweeping wildly through the pass. Men and horses were benumbed with cold, but they struggled on till nightfall, when they came to an inhabited place in Chalco, where the Aztecs pointed out a large house newly built by their country-folk for the accommodation of the traveling public. In this building Cortez and all his men, numbering between four and five thousand, found shelter for the night. Abundance of provision had been stored up here, with firewood ready for use. Every lodging-room was soon warmed by a blazing fire built on the stone floors. The smoke escaped through the open window or door, there being no chimneys in all Mexico.

The army was now approaching the valley by a road which crossed its mountain-wall between the two great peaks, Popocatapetl and Iztaccihuatl, which rise on the south-east like the pillars of some majestic gateway. They had not yet reached the highest point in the pass when they were met by messengers from the Aztec council; they were charged with one more almost despairing message from the council. With childish fear and persistence, they begged the Spaniards even



NEAR VIEW OF POPOCATAPETL.

then, when almost in sight of the city so long the goal of their hopes, to turn back. They laid more gold at the general's feet, with many rich and costly stuffs and an offer of tribute without stint. They were kindly received, as before. Cortez assured them that he would be very willing to oblige Montezuma by turning back, but that he had come by command of his king, who would never be satisfied without a full account of the country from an eye-witness. After a personal interview with Montezuma he would be better able to decide how much tribute the Aztecs should pay to his master.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *MEXICO REACHED AT LAST.*

IT was on the morning of November 8, 1519, that from the top of Illuateca the army of Cortez saw what seemed to their dazzled eyes a landscape in Fairy-land. Snow-capped mountains enclosed a valley rich in bloom and verdure, with clear lakes laughing through the endless summer of a tropical year. In this crystal setting rose a capital worthy of any dream of the far-famed Atlantis. Miles of wide, clean streets radiating from the gates of the colossal temple were lined with massive stone edifices having walls of glittering stucco and terraced roofs abloom with flowers. These houses were the homes of at least three hundred thousand people. A fringe of beautiful island-gardens were seen dotting the lakes, spacious and well-ordered market-places, canals alive with boats, aqueducts whose ruins still attest the superior skill of those ancient masons, parks and pleasure-grounds, and, towering above all, the great pyramidal temple, altar-crowned and smoking day and night like the lofty peaks which marked the sky-line of the landscape.

In spite of the cringing terror which Montezuma had lately betrayed in his messages to them, the soldiers of Cortez, gazing at all this splendor, dreaded to grapple with a people whose civilization seemed not only to equal,



but to exceed, their own. Nothing but his own indomitable courage and towering ambition upheld Cortez as he led the little band of his countrymen over these mountain-walls, whose gates now seemed to close behind him and to shut out all hope of rescue should help be needed. Looking westward from their lofty perch, the soldiers saw the Lake of Chalco, with its island-city and numerous white-walled hamlets peeping out from embowering trees or half hidden amid the luxuriant fields of corn and magney.

It was daybreak when the army began to descend into the Valley of Mexico. They soon reached a well-built town on the mountain-side, now called Amaquemeca. Here they were kindly received by an Aztec official, who kept them two days and supplied them with abundance of provisions and with the gold which they coveted more than all else. Envoys from Mexico received them here, and went with them a march of twelve miles to their first resting-place in the valley. This was in Ajotzineco, a town built partly on the shelving side of the mountain and partly on piles in the lake. The streets of this lower part were all canals, and were alive with the canoes of market-men bringing provisions into the city from suburban gardens, and of others who ministered to the needs of a large population.

The night spent in Ajotzineco was one of great anxiety to the vigilant general. Indian friends had informed him that an attack might be looked for here, and pointed to villagers who came down the mountains or entered by the canal, eager to see the strangers. Cortez professed to take them all for spies, and, probably intending to create a wholesome awe at the outset, ordered the guard to shoot fifteen or twenty of these over-curious visitors.

"But few of them," he coolly says, "returned to give the information they were sent to obtain."

At Ajotzineo, as the army were about to leave, they were asked to wait, as Cacama, the young chief of Tezcuco, was on his way to give the strangers a formal welcome to the valley. He was a young man of about twenty-five years of age, erect and proud, as became an Indian chief, coming in a splendid litter borne on the shoulders of men. As he alighted his attendants began to gather the stones which strewed his path, and to sweep it clean for his richly-sandaled feet.\* As he advanced into the presence of the general he bowed to touch the earth, and then raised his right hand to his head—a Mexican token of respect to a person of high rank now common in Oriental lands. Cacama was bearer of another chilling message from Montezuma. It was Montezuma's earnest wish that the strangers would be satisfied to stay away; but if they were still determined to visit him, he would receive them at his home, as he was too ill to come to meet them.

After an exchange of presents and of brief speeches through Marina as interpreter the Spaniards marched out of Ajotzinco to the causeway across Lake Chalco, a well-built structure wide enough in some places for eight horsemen to ride abreast. The lake was alive with canoes, in most of which were sightseers gliding in and out from among the *chinampas*, or floating gardens, which lined the causeway.

About three miles out in Lake Chalco, Cortez spied a fortress rising out of the water; it was well defended with towers and capable of holding from one to two thousand

\* It is said that this custom still prevails among the Indians of Mexico when a person of consequence is traveling.



view of Mexico, only six miles distant. From Iztapalapa a broad stone causeway led westward through the lake to the island-capital. Very near the city this causeway was intersected by another, which led southward to the mainland. At the junction of these two causeways was a very strong fort with two high towers, surrounded by a double parapetted wall twelve feet high. This was Fort Xoloc, afterward so famous in the siege of Mexico.

After a night's rest in the halls of Iztapalapa the army was met by a large party of Aztec chiefs and warriors gayly dressed in mantles of embroidered cotton or costly feather-work, their faces sparkling with gems set in wrought gold, which hung from lips, ears and noses. As each one came within speaking distance he saluted the general by touching the ground and then lifting his hand to his head. The long procession was an hour passing Cortez with this tedious ceremony. This over, the Spaniards took up their line of march into the city. The streets swarmed with an eager crowd, which covered the house-roofs and filled every doorway and loophole from which a view could be obtained.

As the Spaniards crossed one of the movable wooden bridges which spanned the canals of the city, Montezuma, in a splendid litter and attended by a brilliant retinue, came down a broad avenue to meet them. With him marched two hundred chiefs in single file, in two processions, one on each side of the way and close to the houses. When near the strangers, Montezuma alighted and came forward supported on the arm of his brother-chiefs of Tezcuco and Iztapalapa. Tapestry was spread for his richly-sandaled feet, and a canopy gay with feathers and glittering with gold and jewels was held



over his head. Cortez alighted from his horse and advanced alone to meet the chieftain whom he had so long desired to see. As the representative of his king he would have given to Montezuma those brotherly greetings common among the European sovereigns of that day, but the attendant chiefs instantly checked what they considered undue familiarity. A glittering collar of pearls and crystal which Cortez took from his own neck and threw over Montezuma's shoulders was graciously accepted, however.

In the Mexican ceremony of touching the ground which followed, Montezuma headed the long procession that filed by the Spanish commander. Not an eye was lifted from the ground as with measured step and great dignity the natives passed the strangers whose mighty exploits and mysterious errand to their shores had been for months the theme of every tongue. Montezuma soon returned, and after directing his brother to remain with Cortez he at once re-entered his litter and was borne away.

A spacious building in the centre of the city and opposite the great temple had been assigned to the Spaniards for their use during their stay; here the great chieftain awaited his guests. Taking Cortez by the hand, he led him into a saloon and seated him on a piece of rich carpeting with which the floor was spread, telling him to wait until he should return.

Montezuma soon reappeared accompanied by attendants laden with many costly and substantial gifts, among which, says Cortez, were "five or six thousand pieces of cotton cloth very rich and of varied texture and finish." The soldiers had all been dismissed to their quarters, and, with a few of his officers, Cortez was alone. Taking his

seat on another piece of carpet, near his guest, Montezuma through an interpreter made his first formal speech of welcome. He was a man in the prime of life, tall and well formed, paler in color than his brethren, with a careworn look which was easily explained when we remember the harassing anxiety of the past months. His beard was thin and his hair was long, black and straight, short hair being considered by Mexicans very undignified in a person of rank. He wore a large embroidered mantle sprinkled with precious stones, a heavily-fringed scarf about his loins and sandals with golden soles. Several rich plumes of green towered above his head.

Sitting there on the floor beside Cortez, Montezuma gave the history of his forefathers, going back to days when other white men had come from some far land at the east and gained possessions in Anahuac.\* Their chief afterward went back to his own country, but came again after many years. Those of his people who had remained had intermarried with the natives and built towns, but they would not acknowledge him as their ruler. The disowned chief went away to the east, promising to come again and bring the people into subjection.

"From what you tell us of your country toward the sunrising," said Montezuma, "and of your chief the master of the whole earth, who has known of us and sent you hither to see us, we believe that he is our natural lord, and as such we desire to obey him. We pay our tribute to you in his place. You shall rule this land for him. All we have is at your disposal. We will not deceive you. Since you are in your own country and

\* A name meaning "near the water," applied to the country included between the fourteenth and twenty-first degrees of latitude.

your own house, rest and refresh yourselves after the toils of the journey. I believe that the Totonacs and Tlascalans have told you much evil of us, but do not believe them. They are our enemies. They have told you that my house and my furniture are of gold, that I myself am a god. But you see it is not so;" and he opened his robes as he spoke. "You see that I am flesh and blood like yourselves."

Once more assuring Cortez with much apparent sincerity that he was in his own home and, with his army, would be bountifully supplied with all that he needed, Montezuma concluded his long address and went away.

The quarters assigned to the army were in one of the communal dwellings already described, which, with its hundreds of rooms, was large enough to hold them all. It was very near the great temple, was two stories high in the centre, with many spacious apartments, and had loopholed towers along its walls. Some of these great rooms were hung with gayly-tinted draperies and had inlaid floors and ceilings of smoothly-polished wood. But little furniture was required, since bed and bedding commonly consisted of a mat wrapped about the sleeper, who stretched himself on the stone floor. Other beds were canopied and had soft cotton coverlets.

The Aztecs provided well for their unwelcome guests. A hot supper was spread for all, and the men turned in for the night after taking every precaution against attack. Cannon were planted at each entrance, and the sentinels had orders to shoot any man who left the quarters without permission from the general. It was usual to fire an evening-gun, but the first night which the Spaniards spent in Mexico was celebrated by the most thunderous discharge of artillery it was in their power to make. The whole

city, just quieted after the feverish excitement of the day was roused again, as though the burning mountain on whose hearthstone the city seemed to stand had suddenly belched out fire and brimstone in its very streets.

The next day Cortez and his suite obtained permission to visit Montezuma's palace, which was not far away. Many questions were asked and answered on both sides in this interview. Montezuma showed particular interest in the personal rank of his visitors, and soon made himself acquainted with their names and titles.

It was during these peaceful days of his stay in Mexico that Cortez made his first effort to teach the Aztecs the true faith. He always declared that this was the chief object of his visit, and he would never entrust it wholly even to the priests who accompanied him. As he was always obliged to speak through his interpreter; the Aztec girl Marina, we may suppose that her gentle manner gave a softer tone to the lecture than the zealous general would have wished. How much of the truth the newly-converted Marina could communicate to the devout and thoughtful chief we cannot say, but we know that the story of the cross is thrilling no matter how simply it may be told. No one can listen to the fact that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," without hearing the gospel in its wondrous fullness. But it is not likely that this proud soldier put the meek and lowly Saviour first in his word-picture of redemption. It was not Jesus with his compassion on the multitude, but the cross on which he died—not the salvation he purchased for a lost world, but the Church he had commissioned to proclaim it—that were most prominent in all these discussions.



Montezuma was willing to admit that the Christians' God was good and great and worthy of a place among Mexican deities, but a pious horror filled his mind when it was suggested that he should set these aside and worship one just imported into the country. Had not his people gained all their prosperity since they chose Humming-Bird for their guide and protector? For more than one hundred years they had marched to victory behind his image. On the other hand, if Feathered Serpent was about to assert his old supremacy, could they not win his favor by giving to the Toltec rites which had always been observed in the temple the leading place in its ceremonies? But Cortez insisted on something more than this, and Montezuma was sorely perplexed.

There were two parties not only in the council as such, but among its priestly members. Those who were most loyal to the war-god would have marched to the coast on the first appearance of the white men and swept them out of the country; the other party would do nothing which would offend the hero of the nation's dreams should he be hidden under a Spaniard's armor. To this latter party Montezuma belonged. It must have had considerable strength from the first, or the strangers would not have been received by relays of tribute-bearers. But it is not probable that, with all the superstitious awe with which they were regarded, they would have been allowed without resistance to interfere with the service of the temple. Yet in one of the stories with which Cortez seeks to win his monarch's favor he pictures himself as so full of missionary zeal that the first time he went to the temple with Montezuma he tore down the war-god and his associates from their pedestal and sent them tumbling down the temple-

stairs. He afterward cleansed the darkened shrines where these idols stood, and, forbidding Montezuma ever to pollute them again with human blood, put up in their places images of Our Lady and the saints, which, he coolly adds, "excited not a little feeling with Montezuma and the inhabitants. They at first remonstrated, declaring that if my proceedings were known throughout the country the people would rise against me." Upon this, Cortez preached a sermon on the great sin of idolatry. He represents Montezuma as meekly responding that no doubt he and his people had fallen into many errors, and that Cortez, having so recently come from the home of their ancestors at the East, must know more of the religion they taught than those could who had been so long absent from it, and if he would instruct them in these matters and make them understand the true faith they would follow his directions. He also says, "Afterward, Montezuma and many of the principal citizens remained with me until I had removed the idols, purified the chapels and placed the images in them, manifesting apparent pleasure in the change."

Cortez had from the beginning given his religion a foremost place. However early he might set out, the matin-bell was rung and mass was performed before the troops left their camp. Their march was marked by the crosses they set up on every campground. One of his first orders, therefore, on arriving in Mexico was that a suitable room should be fitted up in their quarters as a chapel. While the carpenters were arranging for an altar they found what seemed to be a doorway recently plastered up. Visions of hidden treasure filled the minds of those who made short work of opening this secret room. Their suspicions proved to be correct:

they found themselves in a large hall filled with rich stuffs, costly ornaments and gold, silver and precious stones. "I was a young man when I saw it," says Bernal Diaz, "and it seemed to me as if all the treasures of the world were in that room." "Hands off!" was a hard command in the face of such a treasure, but Cortez was able to enforce it. He gave orders that the hole should be sealed up, and that for the present no one should mention what he knew of Montezuma's secret hoards.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *A CAPTIVE CHIEF.*

THE only opportunity which Europeans ever had of seeing the Aztecs at home, pursuing the ordinary business of life, was during the first five months which Cortez and his companions spent in the valley. Although a city invaded by the inhabitants of another world—as the Spaniards seemed to the Mexicans to be—must have been excited by their presence, it is probable that Mexico and its people appeared to these visitors much as they had been for nearly a hundred years. Possibly it had not been so long since it had been beneath the dignity of a chief of high rank to walk up stairs. Mexican officials appear then to have indulged in a pomp unknown before and quite out of keeping with the democratic principles of the tribe. An instance of this occurred during this first week in Mexico, when Cortez and Montezuma were together visiting the great temple. They had come to the foot of the first flight of stairs, when Montezuma ordered two stout Indian porters to pick up his guest and carry him in their arms to the top of the building. Cortez resisted, but the chief did not yield the point. He considered that Cortez was the representative of the lord of the whole earth, and that as such he ought to receive all the honors which Mexico could heap upon him.



"You ought not to walk up stairs," urged the chief; "you will be tired."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed Cortez; "a Spaniard is never tired;" and, suiting the action to the word, he sprang up the steps, followed by his stalwart soldiers, leaving the astonished Montezuma far behind in the arms of his carriers.

The markets were inspected by the Spaniards, who drove sharp bargains with the fruit-sellers and the mechanics. They visited the parks, the museum, the botanical gardens, aviaries and menageries, and fished and rowed on lake and canal. Six days thus passed pleasantly away without any disturbance between the Spaniards and their entertainers. Even the Tlascalans, usually so defiant and suspicious, seemed to forget, as they walked the streets gazing on the splendors of the Aztec capital, the vows taken in infancy never to be at peace with their hated neighbors. But such a state of things could not be expected to last long. As Cortez remarked in his letter to the king about that time, "we Spaniards are somewhat troublesome and difficult to please." He was thinking, perhaps, of the strain which would soon be put upon Montezuma's loyalty to his new liege across the sea. Cortez intended to make of Mexico a Spanish city, to gain and to keep its treasure, to colonize the country, to convert the people and to become its princely ruler under the king and the pope of Rome.

Cortez soon decided that his first step must be to get possession of Montezuma and hold him as a hostage while he was teaching the people to submit to their foreign rulers. He supposed that the chief was the hereditary sovereign of Anahuac, and that while he could hold him he would have control of the government. He had the more reason

to expect success in this daring scheme when he saw what power he had already gained over Montezuma through his superstitious fears. The plot did not at first meet the approval of the Spanish officers—not because they felt it to be unjust to their kind and unsuspecting host, but because they were less daring than their leader. Yet he was not long in persuading them to yield to his will, especially when he explained that tidings from the garrison at Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz would furnish him with a good pretext for arresting Montezuma and holding him prisoner. Bernal Diaz tells us that “they were so anxious over this proposition that some of them prayed all night about it.”

It seems that since the army had left Vera Cruz a tribe living to the north of that place had appealed to the garrison for help against Aztec oppression. They wished to ally themselves with the Spaniards as the Totonacs had done, and they declared that they would have sent tribute to Cortez while he was at Villa Rica but for fear of a hostile tribe whose lands they would be obliged to cross. However, such was the awe inspired by the white man that they would dare even to do this if the commandant would send them four Spaniards to protect them from their enemies on this dangerous journey. This request was granted, and the four soldiers immediately set out. It was not long before two of them came back with a terrible story of Indian cruelty. They were the victims of an Aztec plot. The tribe to whose assistance they had been sent were still loyal to their Aztec masters. By the orders of Quancapopoca, the revenue-officer in charge, the four Spaniards had been seized, and all would have been killed had not two escaped to tell the tale.

The commandant immediately went with fifty of his men and several hundred Indian allies to avenge this murder. In the battle which followed, the Spanish commander and several of his men were killed. The Aztec deputy and his forces were, however, completely routed, and fled to the mountains. Prisoners were found in the city, ready to be sacrificed, who accused the Aztecs of decoying the Spaniards into the clutches of their tribe, and said that an attack on Cempoalla was also part of this plan. It was arranged that this story should be told by Cortez during one of his morning visits to Montezuma. Taking with him five of his bravest cavaliers, the Spanish leader arranged that others should drop in as if by accident. The rest of the Spaniards were told to take their places quietly on the street-corners in the neighborhood, to check any attempt the people might make to rescue their chief.

Montezuma was in a very cheerful mood that morning, and so profuse in his gifts that he offered to marry one of his young daughters to Cortez or to one of his men, and to give with her some of his most valuable gems. Cortez refused the lady promptly unless she would become a Christian, but pocketed the gold and the jewels, since they did not need baptism. Leading the conversation toward graver topics, he introduced the story of the treacherous dealing on the coast. Cortez affected to consider the tidings as highly improbable; he said he did not believe his host was capable of such double dealing. Others, however, he said, would not be so charitable; and if Montezuma wished to clear himself, it would be necessary to arrest those who had been concerned in the murder and punish them as they deserved. Montezuma made no objection to this, and immediately gave orders

that the proper officers should be sent after the deputy, who lived nearly two hundred miles from the city of Mexico. Cortez expressed his satisfaction with this despatch; "But," he added, coolly, "my duty to my sovereign will not be accomplished until you have given me some hostage as a guarantee of your good faith. If you will come yourself to my quarters and remain there until this affair has been cleared up, I will be satisfied that you mean to see that justice is done." The startled Montezuma earnestly protested against the seeming lack of confidence in his honor, and offered to provide some one else in his place; but Cortez was firm in his demand, assuring the chief that in no sense would he be a prisoner, and that he should not only have the services of his own followers, but that all the soldiers would cheerfully obey his commands. In his ignorance of the principles of government among these Indians, Cortez put duty before the chief in its strongest light. It was the council which had plotted against the Spaniards. Montezuma, as their executive officer, had given the deputy his orders, and no one could be found so suitable as himself to act as their hostage until justice could be dealt out to those who had only obeyed their despotic commands.

While Cortez was arguing with Montezuma, Velasquez de Leon became very impatient lest the Indians who stood around should become excited and attack them. He cried out at last,

"Why do you waste words on this barbarian? We have gone so far that we cannot go back. Seize him; and if the Indians resist, we will plunge our swords into their bodies."

"But finally," says Cortez in his letter to the king, "he expressed his willingness to go with me, and imme-



diately gave orders to have the apartments he wished to occupy made ready for his use. This being done, many nobles came to him stripped of their robes, which they carried hanging on their arms, and barefooted, bringing a litter, on which, with tears in their eyes, they placed him in deep silence; and in this manner we proceeded to the quarters which I occupied."

Meanwhile, news of this strange visit began to circulate, and the people might have raised a disturbance had not Montezuma quietly bade them disperse. He said that he was only going on a visit to his friends and no one need be anxious for his safety.

True to his promise, the soldiers of Cortez served the captive chief with great deference. His people came freely to see him, and the council held its meetings in the Spanish quarters. The chief's spirit had been thoroughly subdued. He was gentle and patient, very grateful for favors and generous to a fault to his grasping jailers.

The distinguished visitor had time to be fairly settled among the Spaniards when courtiers announced the arrival of the deputy Quancapopoca with a large retinue. He was brought, as became his rank, in an elegant litter, in which he had been carried over the mountains a distance of more than one hundred and eighty miles. He was immediately delivered to Cortez, who put him and his men under a strong guard. At first the whole party denied that what they had done was by the order of Montezuma, but on further questioning they accused him as the author of the plot. The confession, however, did not save them from death. Cortez ordered them to be taken to one of the large public squares of the city, bound to the stake and burned to ashes. Aztec

laws were so severe, and the death-penalty was so common, that this scene made no commotion among the crowd who gathered round.

During the execution Cortez came into his prisoner's apartment with a soldier bearing iron fetters, and charged Montezuma with the murder of the Spaniards. Montezuma was completely overawed, as though he had fallen into the hands of a being who could read hearts, a divine avenger of ancient wrongs committed by the Aztecs. He did not resist when the shackles were put on him, but expressed his humiliation and anguish of soul in moans and tears.

After the victims had been burnt Cortez ordered the chief to be set at liberty. His intention had been to crush the spirit of his captive and make him contemptible in the eyes of his followers. He renewed his efforts to soothe Montezuma and make him content with his fate. At the same time, he publicly announced that it was his wish that the government should be carried on as before, with due obedience to the king of Spain as its acknowledged head. The Aztecs quietly submitted, supposing, as usual, that all Cortez asked was the tribute which they so often exacted of a conquered tribe.

So docile had Montezuma become that when Cortez made the pretence of offering him his liberty he refused the boon, probably fearing that some of his brother-chiefs would kill him if he ventured from under the protection of the Spanish guns. He only asked to be allowed to visit the pleasure-gardens of the city and its neighborhood. Permission was readily granted, since nothing could please Cortez better than to keep his captive in a good humor while he fastened the chains more securely. None of the gay attendants around Montezuma's splendid

litter were gayer than the captive chief himself during these excursions. He was fond of table-luxuries, and one entertainment followed another. The Spaniards were boon-companions, and for a while "all went merry as a marriage-bell." The generous spirit of the chief made it easy for him to satisfy his new friends and keep Marina busy with long descriptions of the treasures of his country.

The mountains which surrounded Mexico were rich in mines of silver and gold, and, as nothing interested the Spaniards so much as to hear of these, Montezuma commissioned some of his people to go with them to visit these vast mineral depositories. One party went with Aztec guides to inspect the mines of Oaxaca, lying about two hundred miles to the south. Their road lay along that great platform of hills on which were built many strongly-fortified towns occupied by a large and thriving population, some of whom surpassed the Aztecs in their homes and in their luxurious habits.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE AZTECS REBEL.*

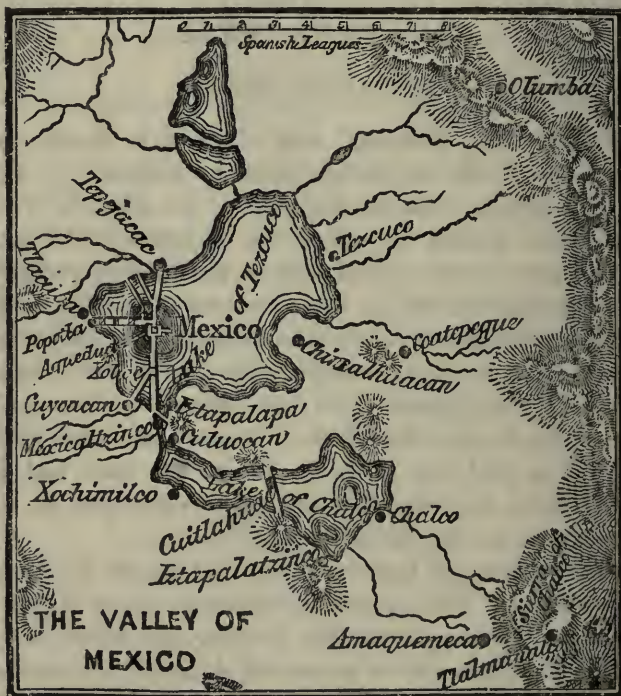
THE young Tezcucan chief, Cacama, so keenly resented the degrading position occupied by the "chief-of-men" that he withdrew to his home in Tezcucuo and refused to attend the meetings which the peace party in the council held in the Spanish quarters. By Montezuma's advice, it was resolved to see what could be done to bring the young man to terms, as it was found that he was heading a conspiracy to unseat Montezuma. Tezcucuo was eighteen miles from Mexico by canoe, and thirty by the lake-shore path. Cacama's home was built partly on land and partly on piles in the water, and so high above the water that the canoes could pass under and come out on the other side.

It was arranged that the visit of the council should be unexpected. They crossed the lake under cover of darkness, and, gliding under the dwelling, the whole party made an entrance by an unguarded door and surrounded the young chief before he realized his danger. He was quietly bound hand and foot and lifted into a canoe, which as quietly paddled across the lake to Mexico. On landing, Cacama was put into a litter and carried to Cortez. Other arrests were soon made, and a successor chosen by the council was installed in Cacama's place.

Montezuma's weak behavior during all this showed



that he and his council recognized Cortez as a master. Montezuma was soon induced to acknowledge himself a vassal of the king of Spain, and to express his desire in a public meeting of the chiefs that all his people should yield to that monarch the obedience which they



had once paid to him. "This," wrote Cortez, "he said weeping, with more tears than it became a man to exhibit." All the chiefs present took the oath of allegiance to the Crown of Spain. A Spanish notary wrote an account of the whole transaction, which account was sent to Charles V.

This unconditional surrender of these proud warriors was in obedience to what they believed to be a decree of the gods—those mysterious beings whose will was the sum of Aztec law. The same deep-rooted superstition led them to make a further sacrifice: the tribute once paid to the council was now to flow into the Spanish treasury. Tax-gatherers were sent out in all directions, coming back in due time laden with treasures, amounting to more than six millions of dollars in gold, drawn from every place subject to Aztec rule. The secret treasure-vault into which the Spanish carpenter had blundered soon after the arrival of the invaders was now thrown open, and its contents were divided. After one-fifth had been carefully set apart for the king, the remainder was distributed among the soldiers. But the more they had, the more they wanted. Murmurs of dissatisfaction had been heard before; now they became loud and deep. Suspicions were expressed that Cortez and his leading officers were getting more than their share of the spoils. It is probable that the war of words would soon have ended in bloodshed had not trouble arisen in a new quarter.

The army had now been six months in Mexico. The Christian worship, which they at all times upheld, had been so far performed in their own quarters. But the great *teocallis* near by was a perpetual reminder that, while they had succeeded in treading under foot the government of Mexico, heathenism was still flourishing. Possibly human sacrifices were not offered on the high altar—Cortez declares that he put an end to these shortly after he came—but the hideous rites to which the Aztecs were devoted no doubt went on as before in other parts of the city. Soon after Montezuma's formal surrender

he was informed that the Christians would no longer hold their worship in secret; they must have the use of the great temple. They wished to erect a cross on its lofty top and in the sight of all Mexico offer adoration to the one true God. Cortez writes that he then went with his men to the great temple, pulled down the idols by force, cleansed the foul and blood-stained shrines and mounted the saints therein, administering all the while a solemn lecture on the sin of idolatry. To do Cortez justice, however, he made quite a scriptural statement of his belief when Montezuma threatened him with the vengeance of his gods: "I answered through the interpreters that they were deceived in expecting any favor from idols, the work of their own hands, and that they must learn that there was but one God, the universal Lord of all, who had created the heavens and the earth, and all things else. He was without beginning and immortal, and they were bound to adore and believe him and no other creature or thing. I said everything I could to divert them from their idolatries and draw them to a knowledge of our Lord."

This last sacrifice of principle was too much for the Aztecs, who had borne all other innovations with comparative patience. Even the meek-spirited Montezuma told Cortez that the people could not be held in check much longer; the white men had better go while they could. Cortez received the chief's suggestion very quietly, replying that he was quite willing to leave the country immediately but for one thing: he could not go without ships, and those in which he came were now at the bottom of the sea. Others must be built, and of course that would take time. Montezuma answered that if this was all that hindered the Spaniards from going he

would begin shipbuilding immediately. Montezuma gave orders that a large force of his own men should go to the coast, under the direction of Martin Lopez, a ship-carpenter who accompanied Cortez, cut down trees and proceed to build a sufficient number of ships to take every Spaniard to his own land. He thought that with this prospect before them he might be able to keep the people quiet a while longer ; if not, he could not answer for the consequences. Cortez approved of this plan, and the men set out. But the Aztec discontent which made this course necessary caused many gloomy forebodings among the Spanish soldiers. The strictest watch was kept day and night ; every man and every horse was ready for battle at a moment's notice.

And now a new trouble arose. Cortez was waiting with deep anxiety for news from Spain. His long letter to the king had never been answered. He had hoped that his glowing descriptions of the new empire he had conquered for his master and the rich treasures he promised would turn the scale in his favor when his quarrel with Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, should come up for settlement. But, so far as he knew, the court had taken no notice of his conquest, and he had reason to fear that delay was caused by a plot in Cuba to supersede or punish him. One messenger after another had been sent to the coast for news without avail ; they were keen-eyed Indian reporters who at last brought tidings which thrilled every heart in the Spanish quarters. The despatches to the council pictured a fleet of eighteen vessels, eighty horses, nine hundred men, ten cannon and about a thousand soldiers. They showed, also, the messengers of Cortez imprisoned by these new comers.

Montezuma, who told the news, was much surprised



when Cortez received it with every token of joy. The soldiers hurrahed, the cannon thundered out a salute in a way which thoroughly perplexed the Aztec chief. But the fact that the Spaniards were divided among themselves came out in time, in spite of all the efforts which Cortez made to hide it.

Angry at the presumption of Cortez in securing so rich a prize for himself, the Cuban governor had sent this force to take him prisoner and wrest this new empire from his hands. Narvaez, the commander of the fleet, was appointed to capture and supersede him. He landed where Cortez first entered Mexico, and the same Indians came flocking to his camp. It was soon seen that these white men were no friends of the conquering heroes who held Mexico in their iron grip, and the news had been discussed in secret meetings of the Aztec council before the Spanish soldiers who were under the same roof knew anything of it.

Hearing about the garrison at Villa Rica, Narvaez sent a summons to the commander to surrender. The insolent attacks made in the summons on the honor of his general so provoked the trusty Sandoval, who had charge of the fort, that he refused to allow the messenger to finish reading it, whereupon the envoy grew very angry and threatened them all with the gallows. Sandoval coolly remarked that if he insisted on reading the summons he should have an opportunity to do so to Cortez himself, and, turning to some stout Indian porters, ordered them to seize the envoys, bind them securely and carry them like so many packs of merchandise to the Spanish general.

News of this strange party reached Cortez in time for him to give them a proper reception. He sent orders to

have them immediately released, set on horseback like true Spanish cavaliers, and brought to the city, not in the guise of enemies, but in that of welcome friends. He kindly apologized for the rudeness of his young captain, smoothed over his quarrel with Narvaez and treated the envoys with such courtesy that the friendship became real and lasting. His efforts to gain the confidence of Narvaez were not so successful; the latter boasted loudly that he would arrest Cortez and put Montezuma again at the head of his people.

News of this threat came to Cortez at a time when one hundred and twenty of his best men were away in the South planting the colony he had planned in more peaceful days; he wrote to them to meet him at Cholula. Then, with seventy soldiers and unencumbered with his cannon, he started for the coast. There were foes without and foes within the little garrison he left behind him, but his greatest fear seemed to be about Montezuma. What course would he take when left to himself? Cortez told the chief he was going to punish a rebel against the king of Spain, and exacted a solemn promise that during his absence the Aztecs should be as obedient to Alvarado, whom he left in command, as they had been to himself. Montezuma's friendly spirit showed itself by an offer of five thousand Aztec soldiers; these were declined with thanks. With the little force at his disposal, Cortez made a rapid march over the mountains to Cholula, where he found friends waiting impatiently to join him. The captain of this colonizing expedition, Velasquez de Leon, was a relative of the Cuban governor. Narvaez had made a great effort to break the friendship between him and Cortez, and his loyalty in such circumstances gave new courage to the anxious general.

With a hundred and sixty-six men in all, and that faith in himself which he seems never to have lost, Cortez now pushed on to Tlascala, and from thence down over the shelving mountains to the lowlands where the enemy lay entrenched. There, in a raging storm whose noise drowned every other sound, he surprised Narvaez at Cempoalla, wounded and captured him, and then set himself to the task of winning the hearts of those who had crossed the sea to fight him, and succeeded in turning an army of foes into friends.

After dismantling the vessels in which they came and stowing their sails and rigging at Villa Rica, Cortez was proceeding to secure this conquest on the coast, when startling news came from Mexico. The Aztecs had rebelled. The garrison were in a state of siege; their quarters had been undermined and several of his men had been killed. The soldiers of Narvaez expected, when they came, to go to Mexico to reinstate Montezuma; they were now willing to go with Cortez to help put him down.

The troops which had been sent away on expeditions in the neighborhood were recalled in hot haste, and, leaving his sick and wounded at Cempoalla, Cortez set out. The path chosen was not the one he had traveled before. The same mountains were to be crossed, but he entered the valley near the city of Tezeuco. The country seemed to be deserted by its inhabitants. The dark forests of cypress and pine through which the road sometimes lay could not be more lonely than were some of the hamlets he passed. As the troops descended the mountain they were met by messengers from the beleaguered garrison. Alvarado implored them to hasten to his rescue. Montezuma wrote to say that he had kept his promise

faithfully and was not in any way to blame for the rebellion. Both seemed hopeful that quiet would be restored when Cortez returned.

Marching around the southern border of Lake Tezcuco, Cortez approached Mexico by the same causeway over which he rode in such state the autumn before. How changed the scene now! The silence of death brooded over the waters. Scarcely a sign of life was visible anywhere till he reached the quarters where the Spanish sentinel aloft in the tower called out that the commander had come. "They received us," says Cortez, "with as great joy as though we had restored their lives to them, which they already considered as lost."

It seems that Alvarado, the hot-headed young cavalier who had been left in command, had attacked the natives during a month of special religious festivals, and that six hundred of the flower of Aztec warriors had been butchered in cold blood. The Spaniards were accused of plundering the bodies of the slain. Alvarado excused himself to his angry general for this outrage by charging the Aztecs with a plot to surprise the garrison and murder them all. The story may have had its origin with the Tlascalans, who no doubt longed to break the friendship between the Spaniards and their own lifelong enemies, in order that they might themselves have a share in the spoils of war.

Whatever may have been the occasion of the outbreak, the long-pent-up hatred of the natives had now burst forth with fury. A cry for vengeance rang through the city. The people attacked the garrison with mine and with fire. Montezuma pleaded with them in vain. At last open hostilities ceased, but the markets were closed



and the water-supply was cut off, in order to starve out the Spaniards. The garrison would have perished but for a little spring of sweet water which was discovered oozing up within the enclosure. Gloomy as was the prospect, Cortez sent a messenger the next day to Villa Rica to tell of his safe arrival; but the man had scarcely started on his journey ere he returned covered with blood and bruises, saying that all the inhabitants were up in arms and the bridges were raised to cut off all hope of retreat from the Spaniards.

The Aztecs now came surging up with wild yells of defiance. The house-roofs could not be seen for the masses of people who covered them and darkened the air with arrows and stones. A volley from the guns checked but a moment the crowd in the street. The infuriated Aztecs tried to scale the walls upon which the guns were mounted, but were beaten back. Firebrands were thrown among the Tlascalan huts, whose thatched roofs burned rapidly; the flames seized on a wooden parapet on the walls, and it was necessary to tear down part of these defences and protect the breach by the guns. Night put a stop to the contest, but the Spaniards were busy till day-break making what repairs they could.

The Aztecs, who slept on the ground, close to the walls, were up before the sun and with fresh recruits renewed the attack. By a sally from the garrison they were driven back to a barricade they had thrown across the street. The Spaniards cleared this obstacle and the whole length of the street to the dyke, the Indians disputing every inch of the way. Every house was a fortress from whose roof showers of stones and darts were hurled on the Spanish coats of mail in the streets below, where a hand-to-hand struggle constantly went on. It was soon

necessary to fire these dwellings, in order to dislodge the assailants. This was slow work, separated as the houses were by gardens and canals. Thus the day was spent. Though many were killed, the enemy, with unabated energy and fierce war-whoops, pursued the retreating Spaniards to their citadel, and then lay down again close to its walls, to be ready for an onslaught in the morning. All their old character had returned. The Spaniards at last had a sight of the traditional Aztecs hungry for blood and desiring no greater glory than to die a warrior's death. On renewing the attack, if all the men who climbed the wall were killed, others pressed eagerly forward to take their places.

It was now resolved to appeal to Montezuma, who sat sullenly in his apartment listening to the wild storm outside, raging at times against the very walls. The unhappy chief at last mounted the parapet and consented to speak to his people.

"They will not listen to me now," he said, sadly, "nor to your false promises, Malinche." \*

It was even so. The Aztecs, stung to madness by the tame surrender of their chief, refused to hear him. A shower of stones was aimed at him, one of which, striking him on the temple, brought him senseless to the ground. Three days afterward he died.

This account of Montezuma's death is not believed among Mexicans; they say that with two other hostages of note he was slaughtered by the Spaniards and his dead body thrown over the wall. Cortez, who speaks very indifferently of this event, says, "I gave his dead body to two Indians who were among the prisoners, and they

\* Malinche, from Malintzin, the lord of Mérida, is the name by which Cortez was always known in Mexico.

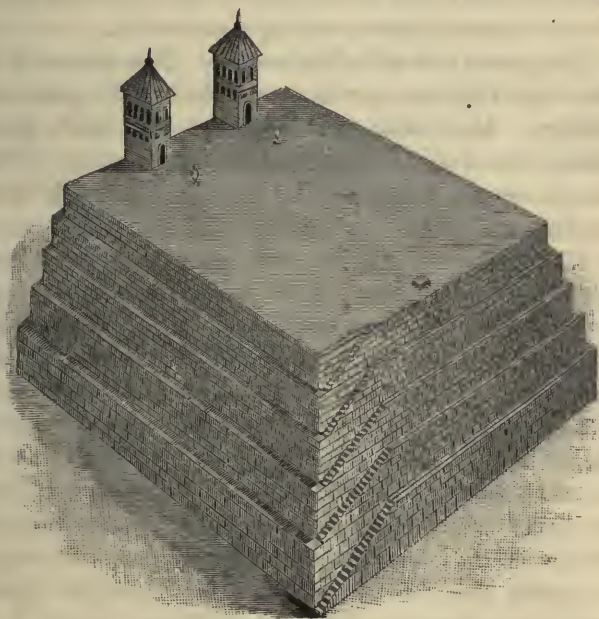
bore it away to his people. What afterward became of it I know not."

An unsuccessful attack made by the Spaniards greatly encouraged the Aztecs, who now advanced to the *teocallis*, partly occupied by Christians, who were soon driven out. About five hundred of the natives took possession of its top, and, laying in a store of provisions and stones, they prepared to fight their enemy from the height of this building, which overlooked the Spanish quarters. It was evident that this fortress must be taken, and the cavalry made a charge to clear the way for the infantry; but the horses slipped on the smooth pavement and were sent back, and some mail-clad soldiers, with Cortez at their head, succeeded in reaching the first flight of steps leading to the second terrace. The whole building was three hundred feet square at the base, and the path to the top went round and round the pyramid by five terraces, a distance of nearly a mile. Each stairway was a scene of fearful conflict, those all along each terrace hurling down stones on the heads of their assailants, who, protected by sharpshooters below, were forcing their way inch by inch to the top. Once masters of this commanding position, the Spaniards set on fire the wooden towers which surmounted the building, tumbling the war-god found there down the steep sides of the temple. Many Aztecs flung themselves over the edge of the platform in sheer despair. A great effort was made to push Cortez headlong to the terrace below, but he was stoutly defended by his men, forty-five of whom lost their lives in this three hours' battle in the air. Not an Aztec escaped.

The capture of this strong position and the fall of their idol struck dismay for a time into the hearts of the Aztecs, and Cortez now called for a parley. The chiefs

came to the meeting-place, but the summons to lay down their arms met with a calm resistance. They answered that they were determined to make an end of the Spaniards if they all died in the attempt.

That night Cortez followed up his advantage by burning three hundred houses. The men who were not doing



MEXICAN TEOCALLI. (From an old drawing.)

this were up all night repairing the movable fortresses under cover of which they hoped to reach those on the house-roofs. But on dragging out these clumsy machines the next morning it was found impossible to use them. The Aztecs had fulfilled their threat of destroying the bridges over the canals; the Spaniards were now obliged



to fill up these water-ways with stones from the razed buildings around them—a work on which they spent two days under a galling fire of stones and arrows. After much exhausting labor communication was opened again with the western causeway, and the cavalry went back and forth over a solid road. It was the only path to the mainland, the Aztecs having broken up every other dyke. But the Spaniards were no longer penned up.

The Aztecs now called for a truce. They promised, if they were forgiven, to raise the blockade and replace the bridges. Meanwhile, they requested that their chief priest, who had been captured in the storming of the temple, should be set at liberty to lead them in their negotiations. This was gladly done.

There seemed now to be some prospect of peace, and Cortez, who had scarcely eaten or slept since the outbreak began, sat down to take some refreshment, when a messenger came in hot haste to say that the Aztecs were attacking the garrison and that several men on guard in the street they had cleared had been killed. Cortez sprang on his horse and galloped to the spot, followed by a few horsemen, who drove the enemy right and left into the side-streets. The foot-soldiers were panic-struck and did not follow immediately, and by the time they rallied a surging mob of Indians had closed in behind Cortez and those who were with him. Canoes loaded with warriors swarmed on each side of the causeway, which was crowded with Indians.

Turning to go back, Cortez reached the bridge nearest the city, but found that it had been shifted, so that the horsemen, pushed from behind, had fallen in the chasm, which was far deeper here, out in the lake, than the shallow canals he had been filling up. The infantry, amid

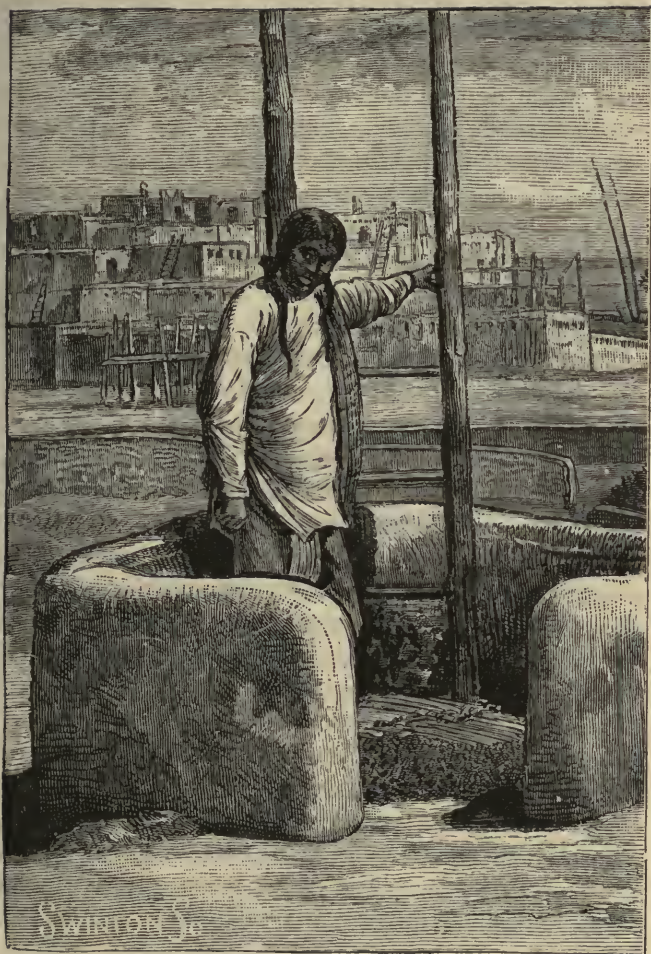
a storm of stones and darts, were dragging the draw-bridge back into position, and Cortez was lost to sight for a time. A rumor spread that the general was dead. Both he and his horse reappeared, however, but many another brave warrior fell that day to rise not again. The Aztecs were once more masters. They held four bridges, while the Spaniards held four others, on the western causeway, nearest the mainland.

The Spaniards now resolved to leave the city. The soldiers of Narvaez had long been clamoring to go to the coast, and all were exhausted by ceaseless efforts by night and by day and unnerved by the seemingly hopeless character of the struggle with a foe which not only outnumbered them a thousand to one, but which, if every Aztec now in the city were slain, could bring a still greater force to the attack in a few hours. It was determined to fall back on Tlascala, going by the western causeway, though it led in a directly opposite direction. But it was the shortest path and partly in the possession of the Spaniards; once on the mainland, they would make their way northward around Lake Tezcuco, and finally due east to Tlascala. Cortez gave up his own horse to carry the king's treasure, but by far the largest part of what had been gained at such a cost was left behind, though a few, more greedy than the rest, loaded themselves with spoil. A son and two daughters of Montezuma, with several leading chiefs—among them Cacama, the fiery young chief of Tezcuco—were in the sad company which marched out of Mexico that night. The most important duty was the management and defence of a pontoon-bridge hastily constructed by the general's orders. This was intended to span the chasm in the causeway, which had been again uncovered and its movable bridge de-

stroyed. When the entire army had passed over this break, the bridge was to be taken up and carried to the next, and so on till all the breaks were passed.

The Spaniards started at midnight, July 1, 1520. The night was dark, and a drizzling rain fell on the silent company which hurried toward the only path of escape. Most of the dwellings in the neighborhood had been destroyed, and there were no priestly watchmen in the high towers of the temple to give the alarm, as in olden times. The Indian sentinels whom they met were soon silenced; the bridge was laid down, and the army was half over before the Aztecs took alarm. Then from far and near they came after their escaping prey, hurrying through the darkness with infuriated yells. The Spaniards pressed on till all were safely over the first opening in the causeway. Then to lift the bridge and carry it to the next! The men plied their strong pikes in vain; the heavy timbers, sunken in the mud and pressed down by the trampling feet of the fugitives, could not be lifted, and, stunned and bleeding from the stones showered upon them, the Spaniards were forced to abandon the bridge, over which the Aztecs now crowded with wild shouts of triumph. Pressed by those behind them, attacked by enemies on the lake, the front ranks fell into the yawning breach, spanned only by a single beam. Some of the horses swam over with their riders; others forded a shallow place. Many were dragged off the causeway and carried away to be slain on the altars of the war-god. The chasm was soon filled with struggling victims or the bodies of the dead horses and men, over which those in the rear made their way to the last opening.

In such peril men often forget everything but their own safety, but in this terrible night the Christians imi-



PUEBLO OF NORTHERN MEXICO.



tated the virtues of their savage foe, who at all hazards bore away their dead and wounded from the field. Those who had safely passed each breach rushed back to save their struggling comrades in the rear, and there was a rally which covered the retreat of the shattered remnant of the Spanish soldiery. But fresh Aztec forces came down like a torrent, and the Christians gave way and swam back among the canoes. Alvarado was unhorsed and left behind surrounded by Aztecs thirsty for the blood of the man who had caused this terrible slaughter. Putting his long lance firmly into the wreck, he vaulted over the breach at a single leap.\*

Cortez sat down and through the darkness watched the shattered army go by. Most of the horses were gone; all of the cannon had been left at the second bridge. Not a musket remained, nor a man who was not wounded. Most of his Tlascalalan allies had perished, while scores of his brave cavaliers had for ever disappeared beneath the briny waters of Tezcuco or had been dragged away to slaughter. But Marina was safe, and Aguilar, Montezuma's daughters and Martin Lopez, the old shipbuilder, with Alvarado and others of his trusted friends, who gathered around their general. It was now his turn to weep, and the tears of Cortez were long remembered by those who know the anguish of his soul that sad night of the Spanish retreat. At Tacubaya, on one of the avenues leading out of the City of Mexico, a gnarled old cypress tree enclosed with a railing stands almost in the roadway, and marks the spot where Cortez stopped to rally his shattered army on the "sad night."

\*The place has always since been known as "Alvarado's Leap;" it is near the western extremity of the Alameda. The lance Alvarado carried is also preserved.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *MEXICO SHALL BE CONQUERED!*

THE end of the western causeway, where it joined the mainland, was still held by the Spaniards. Over this, in the darkness and the rain, the fugitives pushed on to the city of Tlacopan, where Cortez found them huddled together in the great square awaiting his directions.

"To the open country!" he called out. "Hasten, or the Indians will be upon us again!"

To get away from the terrible house-roofs was the general's first aim. But who knew the way out of the city? Now in the van, and now in the rear, the horsemen kept the Indians at bay until the foot-soldiers had gained possession of a large temple which stood on a hilltop outside Tlacopan.\* After some fighting they drove out those who held the building, and, safe for the present, kindled a blazing fire, dried their wet clothes and dressed each other's wounds.

All that night and until dark the next day the enemy gave them no rest. At midnight, guided by a friendly Indian, the Spaniards stole out, and, leaving fires burning, in order to deceive the natives, they took up their line of march for Tlascala. But a sentinel gave the alarm, and the Aztecs came rushing out like a swarm of

\* Now called "Montezuma's Hill." Upon it is a church dedicated to Our Lady de los Remedios.

angry bees all along the road, pelting them with stones and taunting them with their defeat. What with their wounds, the horses overloaded with disabled men, the entire want of artillery and the ceaseless fighting, this first day's march was not over nine miles. Their road led north, around several small lakes, and then east through a mountainous country which gave the Indians every advantage. Huge stones were rolled down from the heights on the fleeing host. Sharpshooters hidden behind rocks and trees let fly their arrows as the Spaniards dragged themselves along or strayed into the fields for an ear of corn wherewith to appease their hunger. Famine might have been added to the other perils of the way but for the wild cherry trees, then in fruit, which everywhere grew in abundance. So many of these hungry men were killed that Cortez was obliged to punish stragglers in order to save the remnant of his army from those of the relentless enemy who hovered around them like birds of prey.

Two nights and a day were spent in camp, to rest the wornout men and horses. During this time crutches were made for those who were too lame or too weak to walk, so that in case of attack the horses would be free for duty. Cortez marched with his men, cheering them on with his own unfailing courage and that faith in his own mission which he never seemed to lose. Most of those with him were veterans who had come with him from Cuba. The recruits he gained from Narvaez, being in the rear in the flight from Mexico, had borne the brunt of the battle, and most of them fell on that "sorrowful night." The poor Tlascalans, too, were nearly all gone, but those who still lived pushed bravely on with their companions in arms, seeming to forget that it was for the

sake of the white men that half the houses in Tlascala would be in mourning.

In one of the skirmishes by the way four or five Spaniards were badly wounded ; among them was Cortez himself. The death of a horse at this time caused great lamentation. The general says, " We derived some consolation from the flesh of this animal, which we ate, not leaving even his skin, so great were our necessities." In this sorry plight they traveled about fifty miles to reach a point only eighteen miles distant, as a bird flies, from the City of Mexico.

About a week after the retreat the troops stood on a mountain-ridge from whose height they looked eastward over the vast plain of Otumba. It was the place called by the early settlers of Mexieo Teot-huacan—"the habitation of the gods." Here were built some of the largest and oldest pyramids on this continent, and here the Aztecs, coming from their distant home a tribe of wandering savages, found one of the most flourishing Toltec cities. At the time when the Spaniards stood on these mountains the ruins of this nameless city were strewn over the plain, but a pyramid almost as large as the great pyramid of Egypt was still standing, crowned with a temple dedicated to the sun. As the army came to the summit of this range they saw what well might strike terror to their hearts. Spread before them as far as the eye could reach was a mighty host arrayed for battle. The white tunics of the common soldiers made the plain look like a field of snow. Gay banners held aloft—each the ensign of some clan or tribe—showed that the multitude had been gathered from many parts of the country. They were there to dispute the passage of the Spaniards to Tlascala. " We thought it certain that our last hour had come,"



said Cortez, "so great was the force of the enemy, and so feeble our own." But after a few inspiriting words from their leader the little band pressed forward as it were into the very jaws of death. The enemy closed about them, attacking them with such violence that the two armies mingled, the Tlascalans being so scattered among their red-skinned brethren that they were entirely lost to sight. The Spaniards defended themselves in little groups of four or five; the mail-clad horsemen dashed about in the crowd in every direction, trampling the Indians under foot and throwing them into confusion, "they being so numerous that they were in each other's way and could neither fight nor fly." The battle lasted nearly all day, and probably would have ended in the total defeat of the Spaniards had not the Indian commander fallen. A great panic followed. "After this," says Cortez, "we were somewhat relieved, although still suffering from hunger, until we reached a small house on the plain, in which, with its surrounding fields, we lodged that night." From this point could be seen the mountains of Tlascala—"a welcome sight which produced not a little joy in our hearts, since we knew it was the land where we were going." Yet a sad, uneasy thought must have forced itself upon the mind of the general when he recollected how few of the brave Tlascalans who a few months before marched with him so willingly to Cholula were now returning to their homes. How could he be certain of a welcome in such circumstances?

It was scarcely daybreak when the army set out for the desired refuge. The enemy still lingered about in such strength and with such shouts and jeers, and something harder and sharper than these, that the Spaniards, although considering themselves victors, were actually

hooted out of the country. Entering Tlascala, the inhabitants brought provisions to them, but wanted to be well paid in gold. The invaders were no longer conquerors who could demand tribute or gods who must be obeyed, but a defeated, fleeing army. They stopped three days at this place to rest, and while there had a visit from some of the leading chiefs of the tribe. Never did noble red men better deserve that title—so often given to them in scorn—than did these Tlascalan braves. They opened their homes to the strangers, carrying the sick and the lame in litters to a place of rest and dressing their wounds with skill and kindness. The old chief Maxixca took Cortez to his own home and gave him a bedstead to sleep on, with clean cotton sheets and coverlets—a luxury he had not enjoyed for many a night. He lay here for days tossing with a burning fever, the result of fatigue and exposure after his wound. Many of the soldiers died here, and were buried in the campground with a rude cross to mark their graves as those of Christian men.

At length the Indians began to mutter over the burden of feeding an army of strangers. Many of the soldiers became homesick and urged Cortez to hasten back to Villa Rica to look after their brave companions there, who perhaps might not be able to hold out in case of a siege. This Cortez determined not to do. He was even then, after all his disasters, forming plans to go back to Mexico and recover the prize which had once been in his grasp. He dared not trust his Spaniards so near the ocean-path to Cuba.

While Cortez was debating this subject with his men a party of Aztec chiefs arrived in Tlascala bringing presents, and offering peace to their old enemies if they would

break friendship with the white men and help to destroy them all while disabled and in their power. Some of the younger chiefs would have accepted these proposals from the Aztecs, but old Maxixca rejected them. His scorn and indignation rose to such a pitch that he forgot the decorum which always prevails in an Indian council, and silenced one of the hot-headed young braves by turning him out of doors.

This generous sympathy of his allies was a great encouragement to Cortez. Shamed by the loyalty of their Indian friends, almost all the Spanish soldiers yielded to his persuasions to return to Mexico. Their first step was to open the highway between that city and the garrison at Villa Rica by an attack on the Tepeacas, a tribe who held two passes through the mountains, and who had murdered a number of Spanish travelers during the recent troubles. Their country bordered on Mexico and was tributary to it, and their Aztec neighbors were even then busy among them stirring up a war with the white men. In the battles with these people Cortez took hundreds of captives and vast spoil. Men, women and children were branded with a hot iron as slaves and divided among his own men and his allies, the first of many thousands of human beings who were afterward thus degraded by the Spaniards.

It was now very evident that all the Indians of Anahuac were watching the struggle between the Aztecs and the Spaniards, ready to take the side of the victor. The crushing defeat of the Tepeacas decided many of them; crowds began to flock to the standard of Cortez. The star of this bold adventurer was now in the ascendant. As an umpire among many warring tribes he settled their quarrels to his own advantage, and in a short time built

up a great kingdom for Spain between Mexico and the Gulf.

The Aztecs, meanwhile, were busy at home as well as abroad. They had selected as "chief-of-men" Guatemozin, an Aztec warrior of the old school ready to die rather than to yield an inch to the invaders of his country. So soon as the failure of the embassy to the Tlascalans was known the Aztecs began to garrison their frontier, fortify their island-city, mend their broken dykes, replace their bridges and rebuild their temples and houses, whose roofs were so important in street-fighting. They had learned much by experience. New instruments of warfare were contrived, in order to defeat the horsemen. Spanish swords lost in those bloody battles on the causeways were fastened on long poles, the better to reach and to cut the horses, which, with the cannon, had made the Spaniards almost invincible.

With the road to Villa Rica clear behind him, Cortez now bent all his energies to the reconquest of Mexico. He resolved to build thirteen boats in such a way that they could be taken apart and carried in pieces over the mountains, to be used in the lake in the siege of the doomed city. Martin Lopez was put in charge of a large force of Indian carpenters, and the woods were soon ringing with the strokes of Spanish axes.

Meanwhile, Cortez sent to Cuba for all else he needed to carry on the war, but before the men and stores arrived he had twice been reinforced by the crews of vessels which had been sent from that island on the same errand which brought Narvaez. In both cases Cortez had the satisfaction of enlisting under his banner men who had crossed the sea to carry him in chains to Spain. Another large company, which came to plant a hostile colony, were



shipwrecked and obliged to put in at Villa Rica for repairs. They were soon persuaded by generous treatment to join Cortez in his expedition against Mexico. Thus by patience and kind words he gained one hundred and fifty men, twenty horses and an abundance of arms and ammunition—all from his avowed enemies.

While Cortez was at Tepeaca, the scene of his recent victories, a messenger came to the camp from Tlascala with sad tidings. Maxixca, the old chief who had been so true a friend to the white men, lay dying of small-pox—a disease of which the Indians had never heard until the Europeans came—which was then raging fearfully throughout the country. To some of his people this affliction was a fresh reason for hatred to the Spaniards, but Maxixca saw in them the children of Feathered Serpent. He believed that they had come in fulfillment of ancient prophecy to claim their old possessions and to lead him and his people to the one true God. In his last hours he sent to Cortez for some one to come and teach him how to approach this great Being in whose presence he soon might stand. The priest Olmedo came in hot haste, and found the dying chief with a crucifix before him, to which his eyes were turned; his old idols, which his fathers worshiped, had all been given up, and he had taken this instead. It was all he had learned of Jesus. In an age when the Church so perverted the truths of the gospel, though not so much given to the worship of the Virgin as afterward, it is good to know that the teaching of Olmedo was plain enough to lead the anxious soul of Maxixca to his true Saviour, so that he died confessing his faith in “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” Four other Tlascalcan chiefs were baptized with him.

Busy with his preparations, Cortez did not come to Tlascala until on his way to Mexico. His army had a royal welcome from their old allies, and more than ever won their hearts when they saw that every Spanish soldier wore mourning for Maxixca. Here they were joined by a vast horde of Tlascalans more eager than ever to fight the Aztecs, and thousands were left behind to bring the boats when Martin Lopez and his men had finished them.

Once more the Spanish army climbed the mountain-walls of Mexico. There was one path so steep and rocky that Cortez thought the Aztecs would not expect him to take it, and by this he resolved to go and surprise them; but the next day, as the troops descended toward the valley from the bald summit where they had encamped for the night, they saw that trees had been freshly cut down, blocking all the way. With great difficulty these were cleared from the road, and, coming to an open space beyond the forests, Cortez halted until his men came up, when, with what seems to have been true devotion, he bade them all join him in thanksgivings to God for bringing them once more in safety to that spot. Before them spread the beautiful Valley of Mexico, with its fair cities, its glittering lakes and its hamlets embosomed in trees. Through the clear air rose columns of smoke from a score of signal-fires. Tezcuco, at their feet, had given the alarm, and from point to point the tidings flew, until every village around the lake knew that the dreaded white men were at their gates. The Spaniards saw that they had need to hasten to Tezcuco before the Indians could have time to rally.

It was from this great city that Cortez intended to attack Mexico. Not being able to reach it before night,

the army halted at a village about six miles distant, whose inhabitants fled at their approach. The next morning, December 31, 1521, the army entered the almost deserted place and took possession of a great lonely dwelling large enough, we are told, to have held all the Spaniards present had they been doubled in numbers. As no one was seen in the streets, some of the soldiers mounted to the top of a tower which afforded a good lookout, and saw the people fleeing in every direction, some in canoes on the lake, and some on foot toward the mountains.

While Cortez was fortifying Tezeuco he sought in every way to make friends of all the tribes within his reach. Most of them professed sorrow for the part they had taken in the late outbreak. One tribe posted watchmen on the mountains overlooking Mexico, to be ready to make an alliance with the Spanish leader so soon as signal-smokes should tell that he had come. While these people were in camp the messengers of another tribe with whom they had long been at war came to Cortez on the same errand. Hearing that they were unfriendly to each other, Cortez told them that he could have no greater satisfaction than would be afforded by his making peace between these old enemies. His object was to unite the tribes of the valley, in order that they might help him to conquer Mexico. After two days in the Spanish camp, the visitors went home in high good-humor with each other and the white men, and determined to put down the Aztecs.

Among the tribes who had old scores to settle with Mexico were the people of Chalco; their alliance with the Spaniards had roused the Aztecs, who now threatened to punish them. Their messengers came in haste to ask for help, showing on a large white cloth a map on which



THE VALLEY OF TULA, MEXICO.



were marked a number of towns about to attack them, with the roads the parties would take. A force was sent immediately to help these Chaleo allies. The wild ravines and mountain-fastnesses now resounded with the din of war as Cortez made a circuit of the valley, leaving behind him a track marked by death and ruin.

Martin Lopez now had his boats all ready; eight thousand Tlascalans had been detailed to bring them in pieces on their shoulders a distance of fifty-four miles. The way was rough and steep, leading over the mountainous back-bone of the continent. This procession of porters was six miles long. Besides these were thousands of armed warriors as a guard, and two thousand men loaded with provision for the multitude. When the long procession came in sight of Tezcuco, Cortez went out to meet it. A salute was fired, the drums beat, the bugles sounded and the cheers of thousands rent the air. For six hours this vast fierce multitude streamed into Tezcuco. Cortez might well tremble over the responsibility of leading an army which were not only savages, but cannibals with a thirst for Aztec blood which was no mere figure of speech. Before the war was over he found that it was so much harder to hold back his merciless allies than to let them carry on a battle in their ordinary way that he set them loose to ravage the country like fiends in human shape.

Every day during these weeks of preparation the army increased in numbers. The Tezcucoans must have come back to their beautiful city in crowds, for, cold as they were at first, they rallied under a new chief, a grandson of Hungry Fox, and came to Cortez fifty thousand strong. His first blow was struck at the aqueduct by which the City of Mexico was supplied with water.

The water was brought across the lake from a spring at Chapultepec. After a desperate conflict, the Spaniards succeeded in cutting the pipes and tearing down the noble structure on which they were laid. Still further to harass the Mexicans and to provide their own camp with food, the soldiers went out and reaped all the grain-fields within reach. Two divisions of the army approached Mexico by land, while others, commanded by Cortez, came in his brigantines.

From a lofty tower in the city of Tezcuco the Spanish leader had watched for the signal-smokes which should tell the dwellers in the valley that the siege had begun. The Aztec canoes had come out in swarms from every town and village around the lake. Iztapalapa had just been burned, and its homeless people were all in their boats. Getting in his brigantine, Cortez bore down upon this fleet, being carried along by a strong wind that was sweeping over the water at the time, and without a shot from the cannon on their decks hundreds of the smaller crafts were crushed like eggshells and the rest chased back into the canals which interlaced the City of Mexico.

An encampment on the southern causeway leading to the city was the end of the first day's work. The Indians made an attack that night, but were quickly repulsed by the brigantines. The next morning neither land nor water could be seen for the multitude that poured out of the city, "all howling as though the world had come to an end," said Cortez.

It being seen that the canoes had come from the side unprotected by the brigantines, the Indian allies were set to work to widen every sluiceway through the dykes, in order to allow these large boats to pass. Up to that time

most of the lake had been fenced off, but in a few days the water-patrol was able to go all around the island-city and assist each division of the army.

As the Aztecs had broken up the bridges over nearly every canal in the city, the streets were full of ugly gaps which could not be crossed by horse or foot in the daily assaults. The friendly Indians now filled these with bricks and rubbish, and strict orders were given that no advance should be made except over a solid road. But, as the Aztecs were busy every night undoing what was done by day, the work was repeated again and again.

Alvarado was the first to forget the warning. Cortez saw his command one day flying back in hot haste and the enemy, like dogs in full cry, pursuing them. In front was a bridgeless canal into which the whole party, horse and foot, were driven. In the attempt to save them Cortez was dragged off his horse, and would have been carried away in a canoe had not several of his men sacrificed their own lives to save the life of their general. Forty-five Spaniards and a thousand Indians were lost in this battle. As the survivors retreated to the great square to defend themselves against the yelling throng which pressed upon them from every side, faint odors of burning incense of a kind only used in sacrifices came floating down from a high tower near by. Looking up, the Spaniards saw what chilled the life-blood in their hearts. Aztec priests were dragging several victims to sacrifice, and, from their white skins, they knew them to be their own fellow-countrymen. They saw the wretched captives made to dance before the idol.

This victory was celebrated by the Mexicans with wild enthusiasm. Drums were beaten and horns were blown. Messengers were sent to every old ally, carrying the

heads of Spanish men and horses, with a call for help to drive out the invaders by a grand rally of all the tribes. Whatever fear the Spaniards felt at this crisis they kept to themselves; their savage allies, who could so soon be changed into savage enemies, knew nothing of it. Some friendly tribes, being threatened with an attack from the Aztecs, sent to ask help, and it was freely given, though the Spaniards had to be divided to do it.

It was now forty-five days since the siege had begun. Much of the city was already laid waste. Montezuma's house, with its aviaries, museum, magnificent summer-houses and lofty corridors, was a mass of smouldering ruins. The old Spanish quarters, near by, were also torn down, and with the bricks from these and other buildings the Tlascalans had reared barracks for the Spaniards and themselves on the southern causeway.

At a council of war to which the allied chiefs were summoned it was resolved to begin on the outskirts of Mexico and level everything to the dust, filling up the canals as the advance was made. The Aztecs saw this work begin, and seemed to know that the worst had come. They tried to discourage the Tlascalans, who pulled down their houses, crying out to them that they would have their trouble for nothing, for, whichever side conquered, they would have to rebuild the city. But the direful work went on. Even Cortez regretted the destruction of this beautiful city. Seven-eighths of it were now in ruins. The people had been living on roots, the bark of trees and rats, without good water and surrounded by dead bodies. Famine and pestilence added their ravages to the terrible devastation. Women and children wan and haggard with disease and hunger wandered about the ruins. The allies were charged to let the wretches



alone, but the Indians knew no pity, and, although for three days after they reached the heart of the City of Mexico no regular fighting was done, a merciless carnage went on. The people and many of the chiefs would have yielded, but Guatemozin and his adherents seemed bent on making the difference between Montezuma and themselves as striking as possible; Guatemozin would die rather than surrender. A captured Aztec chief sent back to him to treat for peace was killed, and the message was returned, with a shower of arrows, that "death was all they wanted now."

The truce was concluded, and hostilities began again. The story of the dreadful days which followed can never be fully told—how these miserable, starving people were hunted out of their hiding-places to be shot down in the streets or driven into the water. One of the stratagems used was to collect into one great basin all the canoes that could be found, so that when the houses were attacked the helpless inmates had no means of escape across the canals, but were stabbed and drowned. At last one of the brigantines on duty in the lake—a large basin in the city—broke through a fleet of canoes which had gathered there, giving chase to one in which was evidently some important personage. The Spaniards were about to fire upon the party, when some one signaled to them that the "chief-of-men" was there. The master of the brigantines bore down upon them instantly, and Guatemozin, with his companions, was soon led into the presence of Cortez, who was on one of the housetops near the market-place. "I made him sit down," said the conqueror, "and treated him with confidence; but the young man put his hand on the poignard I wore at my side and entreated me to kill him, because, since he had done all his

duty to himself and his people, he had no other desire but death."

Thus, on the 13th of August, 1521, ended one of the most cruel sieges recorded in history—the first experience which the heathen of this New World had with the so-called Christians of Europe.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### *THE HEEL OF THE OPPRESSOR.*

A GREAT storm broke over the ruined city the night after the surrender of Guatemozin. The rain came down in torrents, as though the pitying heavens would wash out the awful blood-stains with which men had polluted the earth. The streets were deserted by friend and by foe. Only the dead were there, lying in silent heaps over which brooded the pestilence.\* More than fifty-five thousand persons are said to have perished within the city by sword and by famine in that siege of seventy-five days.

Taking with them the captured chief Guatemozin and all the treasure which could be found after a most diligent search, the Spaniards withdrew to Cuyoacan, a city on the mainland, not far south of Mexico.

Cortez had not secured peace for himself by the destruction of Mexico. Envious tongues were busy against him on both sides of the Atlantic, and he was in constant danger of arrest and recall. More than once directions were sent to Mexico to hang him without the ceremony of a trial. Admiral Columbus, a son of the great discoverer, was one of those who came from Cuba to put an end to what were deemed his treasonable designs. In

\* The remnant of the population, at the request of the conquered Guatemozin, went to the neighboring villages until the town could be purified and the dead removed (Bernal Diaz).

spite of these untoward circumstances, and before the smoke of battle had fairly lifted, Cortez sent out exploring parties to continue the search for that strait to the south seas of which all Europe was dreaming, and with less than a thousand of his countrymen, some of whom were disloyal at heart, he proceeded to garrison the valley and the Gulf coast, and to subdue the outlying tribes.

Among those who came to pay their respects to the conqueror were the Michoacans, a powerful tribe living about two hundred miles west of Mexico. Warned by the fate of that city, and afraid, perhaps, that their turn might come next, they hastened to become the allies of the great lord Cortez claimed to represent. He received the embassy, which was headed by the principal chief himself, with the honor due to distinguished visitors, and by way of entertainment took them in one of his brigantines to view the ruins of the great Aztec capital. They gazed on the widespread scene of desolation with mute wonder, but seemed much less impressed by that than by the running of the horses and the noise made by the black monsters that vomited fire.

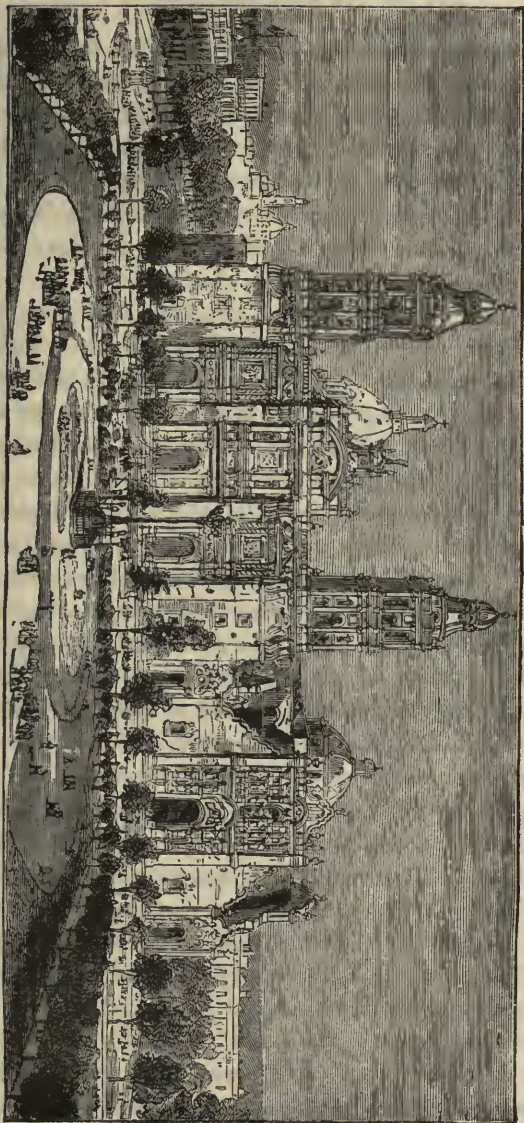
These people told of a great sea lying near their country, toward the sunset. About the same time Cortez heard of another large body of water, stretching far to the south. In the geographies of those days all unknown lands were counted as islands, and, now that it was settled that the world was round, men were continually looking for a passage between these to "other islands, rich in gold, pearls, precious stones and spices."\* The report of these Indian visitors therefore received immediate attention. Explorers were sent west and south

\* Cortez.



with strict orders not to return without discovering and taking possession of these seas by setting up crosses along their shores.

Meanwhile, it was necessary to plant a colony somewhere in the valley to secure to Spain possessions which had been won at such a cost. There seemed to be no better site for the city which Cortez proposed to found than the island on which Mexico once stood, and no better men to superintend its rebuilding and repeopling than two Aztec chiefs, one of whom was Montezuma's son and the other his associate in office, the *cihua-coatl*, or "snake-woman," as the second chief was called. Although he was head of the tribe while his partner was in captivity, Tihucoa's name does not appear in history until the great tragedy was over, and then only as a taskmaster over his conquered people and as the traitor who finally caused the death of Guatemozin. So vigorously did the work go on that in October, 1524, when Cortez wrote his last letter to Charles V., the new city already contained thirty thousand householders, a fine market supplied with all the old-time luxuries, beautiful gardens that fringed the lake-shore and dotted its broad expanse, while Christian churches lifted their towers heavenward over the ruined shrines of this land, still overshadowed with heathenism. The great stone of sacrifice, the calendar, the war-god, and numerous other relics of the former life of these people which could not be destroyed, were buried in a deep pit, according to the order of the conqueror; these were all dug out again in 1790. A large convent replaced the famous House of Birds, and on the site of Montezuma's residence arose the splendid palace of the viceroys of "New Spain of the ocean sea." Cortez had a fancy for long, high-sounding names, and



THE GREAT CATHEDRAL OF THE CITY OF MEXICO.

it was his request that the country he had conquered should bear this title. Strange to say, however, though Mexico rose from its ashes a Spanish city, with so many radical changes, the conquerors never seem to have thought of giving this place a Christian name. It was at first Tenochtitlan—"Stone-Cactus Place;" now, as though to show that it was as truly heathen as ever, it was called Mexitli, after an Aztec god.

Mexico was now more of a fortress than ever, though it did not cover so much ground as formerly it had done. All the canals were filled up and the streets laid out wide and straight. Day and night the work went on until it was completed. Like the children of Israel who built the cities of old Egypt, the lives of these Aztec masons and carpenters were "made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." On the foundations of the old *teocallis* rose a great cathedral. The Aztecs had boasted that human blood and precious stones had been freely mingled in the mortar of their temple; the building which replaced it, though dedicated to the Prince of peace, cost them far more in human life and treasure.

In time nearly all the country known at the beginning of the sixteenth century as Mexico was conquered by Spain. A few wandering tribes at the North continued to defy all attempts at subjugation, and still lived by the chase. Village Indians—who, as far as possible, have maintained their old laws and customs, in spite of foreign intruders—have always boasted with a laudable pride that no Spanish, or even Aztec, banner ever floated over their lands. These are tilled in common now as then. These people still speak their old dialects and refuse to learn any other, communication for the purposes

of trade being kept up by a few men who act as interpreters and attend to the business of the tribe. In recesses among the mountains far to the south are tribes which have held entirely aloof from white men, whose very existence is known only by hearsay. Many others that are better known have been so reduced in numbers and so broken by oppression that scarcely a trace of their old character remains.

Some who took the wrong, or unfortunate, side in the struggle constantly going on between Cortez and his Spanish enemies were punished with fire and sword. Many a chief was hung from his own roof-tree or burned at the stake, while thousands of the common people were branded as slaves and sold to the highest bidder, to wear out their lives in cruel bondage.

Poor Guatemozin, the young Aztec "chief-of-men," lost his life in these contentions. It was in 1525. Cortez had gone to Honduras, a journey of fifteen hundred miles, to put down D'Olid, one of his captains, who had been sent to the south on a colonizing expedition and undertook to set up for himself. Besides his Spaniards, horse and foot, Cortez had three thousand Mexican troops. The wild mountain-ravines echoed with the strains of martial music as they passed along, while buffoons in gay attire cheered the way with jest and song. But during this almost kingly progress through the land food and provender gave out, and the whole army were in great peril from famine. For days they subsisted on grass and the roots of an herb which burned the lips and the tongue. The poor fool who rode near Cortez was the first who died. The Indian guides lost the way, and the whole party would have perished in those pathless forests but for the mariner's compass which Cortez always car-



ried. The army became so disorganized that each man foraged for himself. Sandoval, the faithful friend of Cortez, was obliged to go out at night to procure food for him, for his rations were stolen constantly. It is said of the Mexicans that from the chiefs down they fared much better, as they kidnapped unwary natives in villages through which they passed and had some cannibal feasts until Cortez heard of it and put an end to their orgies.

In this state of affairs the Aztec chief who rebuilt Mexico came to Cortez with the story of an Aztec plot to reinstate Guatemozin in his chieftainship. At no time since the conquest had there been a better opportunity for revolt; the city was weakly guarded and the garrison was a house divided against itself. The informer showed Cortez pictures of those who led the conspirators; they were Guatemozin and his friend, the chief of Tlacopan. They were both seized immediately and examined separately, and after a short trial, with dubious proofs of guilt, both were hung by the roadside on a great ceyba tree. The people, seeing Cortez in his tent studying his chart and compass, concluded that he was a magician, and that the trembling little needle he so anxiously watched had been telling him the secrets of hearts. Some of them, afraid for their own lives, came to him and begged him to look again at the strange oracle and ask it if they were not true friends to the white man. It is needless to say that Cortez improved this, as he did all other opportunities, to establish his character of a *teule*, or god.\*

The subjugation of the tribes of Mexico was not accomplished until the Spaniards had swept the land as with a besom of destruction. Cities were depopulated

\* The Spaniards were known as *tezules*, or gods, long after they were found to be like other men.

and leveled to the earth, the mountains denuded of their forests, streams and lakes dried up, the farms laid waste, and those of the people who escaped the awful havoc of war were driven into hopeless slavery. The bishop of Chiapas affirms that fifteen million out of the thirty million found by the Spaniards on entering the country had been cut off before the land had been quieted in that mental and moral death which followed the conquest. Well may historians call this "one unspeakable outrage, one unutterable ruin"!

The priests who accompanied the army of zealots which overran the country seem from the first to have counseled more gentle measures, but all alike were bent on forcing the conquered race into obedience to the pope. They had come to wipe out paganism and drive the people like a flock of frightened sheep into the fold of the true Church. When they saw the picture-writings of the Aztecs and the sculptured walls of their temples, it was decided that all such heathenish rubbish must be put out of sight as soon as possible. Thousands of carefully-written books were therefore piled up and burned, and as far as possible everything which reminded the people of their ancient faith was destroyed, unless, as was often the case, it could be furbished up and adopted by the Church. Without waiting to understand enough of the language to communicate an idea in words, they baptized the natives in crowds. One priest boasted that he had *converted* and brought into the Church from ten to fifteen thousand in a single day. So superficial was the work that, although Mexico became one of the most faithful and intolerant upholders of Rome, so much of the ancient idolatry remained that to this day intelligent defenders of the papacy visiting Mexico blush for shame at what

they may well call a paganized Christianity. In many cases the same idol has served for both forms of idolatry when reclothed, renamed and well sprinkled with holy water. Tomantzin — “Our Mother” — was once worshiped by crowds in the very spot now sacred to the Virgin of Guadalupe, the tutelar divinity of Mexico.

The land must have been full of idols. The Franciscans boasted that in eight years they had broken twenty thousand images. On a high mountain in Miztec one of the Dominican friars found a little idol called “the Heart of the People.” It was a beautiful emerald four inches long and two wide, engraved with snakes and other sacred devices. Knowing its great value as a gem, a Spanish cavalier tried to buy it, but the pious friar was horror-struck at the idea, and, proceeding with what he considered his duty, he ground it to powder and strewed it to the winds.

In this respect the early Fathers were a great contrast to those who followed them. One of the first acts of Cortez as governor-general had been to propose a plan for the conversion of the Indians, and one of its prime requisites, in his opinion, was that no prelate or bishop should be sent to New Spain, since the first object of such officials would be to make money. “They will use,” he says, “the estates of the Church in pageants and other foolish matters, and bestow rights of inheritance on their sons or relatives.” He told the king very plainly that if the Indians had an opportunity to compare the honest, moral lives of their old priests with those led by the corrupt dignitaries of Rome it would be worse for the latter: “If they, the pagans, understood that these were the ministers of God who were indulging in vicious habits, as is the case in these days in Spain, it would lead them

to undervalue our faith and treat it with derision, and all the preachers in the world would not be able to counteract the mischief arising from this source."

On May 13, 1524, there landed at San Juan de Ulua a company of twelve Franciscan friars, sent to Mexico, in response to the original call of Cortez, for the purpose of converting the Indians. These monks fully realized what was asked of them, and became not only the spiritual advisers, but actually the material protectors, of the Indians. They taught the Indians to work. Among the many missions established by them amidst these people, those of the west coast were both financially and spiritually the most successful. The first white settlers in California were Franciscan monks. They found there a less warlike and energetic people than those in the Valley of Mexico, and trained them to habits of industry and devotion. Substantial churches and mission-buildings soon arose in the wilderness, about which clustered the little adobe villages surrounded by fields and orchards. The only roads for many years to be found in the country were those between these stations. Many of these missions became very rich. At the beginning of the last century the Franciscan monks of California owned immense tracts of land and carried on a thriving business with Russian merchants from the far North-west in wine and wool, hides and tallow. In this way Spain was able to claim as her own the whole Pacific coast as far as Puget Sound. The Indian converts were patient, docile children whose prayers to the Virgin and the saints led their hearts into ways so old and familiar that but little violence was done to their feelings in the change from one religion to the other. When from any failure or from removal these Indians were left to them-



selves, they relapsed into barbarism. They held their lands again in common and as far as possible kept up their old tribal organization. These divisions were known even among those who had been under the heel of the oppressor for generations. They often elected a chief whose only privilege was to serve as a taskmaster over his people. A hardy and industrious race, they cling tenaciously to the homes and the habits of their forefathers in spite of the most stringent laws, by which their masters strove to mingle the tribes. Thirty-five of these tribes are known to have survived the conquest. Many of them inhabit the same villages, speak the same dialect, work at the same business and with the same rude tools as those which their ancestors used generations ago. Loyal as they may be to the corrupt religion which was forced upon them, many in remote and isolated places are looking for Montezuma to return, confusing him, no doubt, with Feathered Serpent, in whom their fathers so vainly trusted. The revolt of the Zapotecs in 1550 was due to this hope. We are told that the sacred fire which once glowed on Aztec altars is still kept burning in hidden caves, and of Indian boys whose solemn chants morning and evening toward the rising and setting sun tell of heathen superstitions which have survived three hundred years of Romish teaching.\* This last beautiful

\* In 1847, Brantz Mayer writes: "While at the hacienda of Tamise, near Cuernavaca, he pointed out to us the site of an Indian village at the distance of three leagues, the inhabitants of which are almost in their native state. They do not permit the visits of white men, and, numbering more than three thousand, they come out in delegations to work on the *haciendas*, being governed at home by their own magistrates, and employ a Catholic priest to shrive them of their sins once a year; they earn their wages, make their own clothes of cotton and skins, and raise corn and beans for food."



CHURCH OF TEOTIHUACAN, MEXICO.

custom was adopted by the Church of Rome, and might have carried many Indian hearts heavenward in true devotion had the hymns or the prayers been written in a language the natives could understand. It is through these simple, ignorant people that the Church party has always maintained its hold on Mexico. The Indians seem to be grateful for the protection given to them in earlier years by those priests who had devoted their lives for the good of the children of the soil.

The frightful oppressions of the Indians by the colonists were for many years combated by the monks. When Charles V. changed the form of colonial government to that of an *audiencia*, the president and four councilmen who composed the body seem to have vied with each other in keeping up the pomp and ceremony of court-life, and the labors of the Indians in building their palaces and in bringing provisions for their luxurious establishments were greatly increased. In six or eight months one hundred and thirteen persons, men and women, died from exposure in carrying burdens from distant mines and fields and gardens through the snow and rain of those bleak uplands. The monks, who always sided with the Indians, thundered from the pulpit and the confessional, aiming especially at the auditors, whose sumptuous works were carried on at such a sacrifice of human life. The *audiencia*, in revenge for some of the plain sermons of the first bishop of Mexico, cut off his support. He retaliated by excommunicating the *audiencia*. In 1530 a great *junta*, or council, was held in Spain, to consider the important questions arising out of the relations between the colonists and their serfs; for such they truly were. The decision was unanimously in favor of the Indians.

Of the priests, none were more faithful friends to the natives than was the philanthropist Las Casas. While a young man residing in Cuba his attention had been called to their wrongs. His Dominican confessor had decided that his sins could not be forgiven while he owned Indians. With his eyes thus opened, Las Casas began to preach against his brother-slaveholders. He finally saw it to be his duty to go to Spain to plead the cause of the Indians with the king himself. It seems that while Charles V. was yet a boy his heart had been touched by the stories related to him by Las Casas, who had been to America with Columbus in 1494. Las Casas determined to use his influence with the king in behalf of the oppressed people of Cuba and other islands, who were melting away.

Las Casas became a priest in order to preach the gospel to the Indians and humanity to their oppressors. He had a friend in Cuba to whom he applied for money to enable him to carry out this noble aim. To his surprise, he found that the eyes of his friend, Reuteria, had also been opened, and that he was preparing at that very time to go to Spain on the same errand. After conferring together, however, it was decided that, since they were both so poor, Reuteria should mortgage his farm and Las Casas should sell his horse, and that all they both could raise should be spent by the latter in a trip to Spain. While there he gained new light on the avarice and tyranny of the Spanish colonists. The facts were so disheartening that he was afraid to speak all his mind to the all-powerful Cardinal Ximenes, with whom he consulted about the wrongs of the Indians. But one day he asked,

“With what justice can these things be done, whether the Indians are free or not?”



Ximenes exclaimed,

“With no justice! What! are they not free? Who doubts about their being free?”

It was while such discussions as these were going on that the planters bethought themselves that the negroes of Africa might replace the Indians. While Charles V. was in Germany he was besieged with petitions to grant licenses for the importation of Africans to till the depopulated soil of the West Indies and of other Spanish colonies. Ximenes protested, and twelve times during fifty years Las Casas crossed the sea on his philanthropic errands, but in vain.

One of the earliest effects of the discovery of America was a division of its lands (*repartimientos*) among the settlers from the Old World. In 1497 a patent was granted to Christopher Columbus authorizing him to divide the newly-discovered countries among his followers. It was his decision that “the natives should till the soil for the benefit of those who hold them.” Little did this good man think of the inheritance of shame and sorrow he was preparing for his countrymen and their victims in lands he had never seen.

At first the Spaniards had only a life-estate in the serfs; next, the owner had the right to the service of a man and his son, and finally the natives were doomed to unending servitude. They could be taken from place to place at their master’s pleasure, with such wages as he chose to give or with none at all. These removals were the sorest trial the village Indians could endure. To be torn from the lands their forefathers had tilled, to work in mines for life, and to be compelled to labor on farms when they had been trained at the loom, were alike irksome to these creatures of custom. Not only toil, but tribute,

was exacted. Every male over fourteen was obliged at appointed times to bring a little packet or quill of gold-dust if he lived near to or worked in a mine ; or if he had no gold, he paid tribute in cotton.

After several experiments, the government of Mexico and of other Spanish colonies in the West was confided to the "council of the Indies," a body of men appointed by the king and nominally responsible to him. This council was represented in New Spain by a viceroy, who, with the old *audiencia* for his counselors, was absolute enough for a real monarch. There had been so much difficulty in ruling through persons of inferior rank, like the *audiencia*, that it was decided to put a man over them with "that divinity which doth hedge a king," that he might stand between the natives and the crowd of money-making adventurers who were flocking to America. Of the sixty-four viceroys who reigned in Mexico, several seem to have befriended the downtrodden race over whom they were placed. The second of these rulers declared that "justice to the Indians was of more importance than all the mines in the world, and that the revenues they yielded to the Spanish Crown were not of such a character that all human and divine laws were to be sacrificed in order to obtain them."

During the reign of Mendoza, the first viceroy, the Indians, grown desperate with their manifold wrongs, rose in their first formidable rebellion since the death of Guatemozin. The old names of Tlascala, Cholula and Tezcuco gleam out as of old in the records of these stormy days, although in the guise of serfs one scarcely recognizes the proud warriors of twenty years before. Up to that time their chiefs still wore their old insignia of rank and tied their hair on the tops of their heads

with red leather. Those who had been loyal to Spain were now rewarded by permission from the viceroy to ride on horseback and carry a gun when they followed him to put down the insurrection. The *gachupines*\* were very angry about this conciliatory policy of the wise Mendoza; but when the news reached Spain, the king, who always had in his heart a warm corner for the Indians, was so much interested that he issued an edict of emancipation, with full authority to the messenger who took it to Mexico to enforce all its commands.

If putting the Indians on horseback was an affront to the Spanish pride, the planters were much more deeply moved when their pockets were touched. After a vain attempt to resist the new law, a delegation of Creoles was sent to Spain to protest against this sentimental interference with their human machines. The good Las Casas, then bishop of Chiapas, tried his hand at mending matters, but he was too true a friend of the red men to be tolerated, and he was ever afterward regarded by the planters as their enemy.

Unfortunately for the Indians, the delegation reached Spain at a time when Charles V. was in great trouble. He was always in want of money to carry on his numerous wars, but never had he been in such need as now. The Turks, who for a long time had been thundering at the eastern gate of his empire, now boldly entered and snatched away the crown of Hungary, which he must win back at any cost. His quarrels with his neighbor across the Pyrenees, Francis I., were now at their height, and both these potentates were ransacking Europe for allies and borrowing money wherever they could get it. For political reasons, Charles was just then very friendly

\* The Mexican name for natives of Spain.

with the Protestants, and had thus offended the pope, who would be sure, unless pacified, to retaliate by stirring up trouble in other quarters. Besides all this, the ravages of pirates in the Mediterranean called for a strong hand to punish these old offenders. In doing this a great Spanish fleet was lost in one of the most awful storms which ever swept the seas, and hundreds of ships were wrecked, with the loss of eight thousand men. It will easily be seen that with all these troubles the emperor could not afford to quarrel just then with his colonists. Favored by these circumstances, and by means of bribery, the Mexican delegation carried their point and went home rejoicing, to rivet still tighter those chains which bound the Indians of New Spain to a life of hopeless slavery. Although a few of the principal Indian families remained who by law were entitled to the privileges enjoyed by the Spanish nobility, they were a conquered people and lived in bondage. It was to the interest of their conquerors that they should be kept in ignorance, counted as minors, shut up in villages by themselves and forbidden to engage in commerce.

The natural taste of the Indians for engraving, embroidery, feather- and mosaic-work, modeling in clay, and other like occupations requiring artistic skill, met with great disapproval from the Council in Spain. They were forbidden to engage in anything but the coarsest work, lest they should become discontented or unfit for menial service. This oppression was at last so evident to the world that the pope, with all his jealousy of Charles V., declared that "the Indians are really and truly men capable of receiving the Christian faith."

But those original proprietors of the soil were often sullen and distrustful, only held in check by the strong



arm of the law, and quite as liable to break out in unexpected times and places as were the long-slumbering fires of their own volcanoes. Again and again in Spanish colonial history was the cruel Indian warfare of our own times enacted. During a time of famine they burned the palace of the viceroy over his head and tore down some of the public buildings in a blind fury which struck alike at friend and at foe. Even the labors of their kind-hearted spiritual Fathers were several times repaid by general murder and pillage.

Famines were sadly common. At one time this disaster was followed by a plague which carried off two million people. In the all-absorbing search for gold the old system of irrigation was neglected, and the mountains, made bare of their natural covering of trees, ceased to regulate the supply of moisture. The streams, suddenly swollen by rain, often became raging torrents, and, overleaping their natural bounds, poured down the mountain-sides into the lakes. In the Valley of Mexico there were five of these which were often so full in times of freshets that they overflowed every barrier and ran together.

Lake Tezcuco, in which the City of Mexico originally stood, and which is still near it, is twenty-six feet lower than Lake Zumpango, farther north. In 1607, after the city had been several times flooded by the influx of the waters from the upper lake, it was resolved that it should be drained by tunneling the mountain-wall which surrounds the valley at its lowest point. Fifteen thousand Indians were set to work on this gigantic enterprise, and by a reckless sacrifice of human life the subterranean canal, twelve miles long, was cut through in a few months, making an outlet to the sea. But the torrents

which sometimes flowed through it carried with them so much sand and rubbish that the canal was soon choked up, not being made with a sufficient slope to give momentum to the current. The sides gave way, the vaulted roof fell in, and the upper lake was dammed up again. More than seventy years afterward the *consulado*, or incorporated merchants of Mexico, took the work in hand and resolved to make an open cut. This was done, at an enormous expense of men and money, about one hundred



REFRESHMENTS FOR THE HUNGRY (MEXICO).

and thirty years after it was begun. During this time Mexico was almost entirely under water for five consecutive years. The foundations of houses were destroyed, and such misery prevailed that the court at Madrid gave orders that the city which Cortez built should be abandoned and a new Mexico built, on higher ground. Happily, several earthquakes during the year 1634 cracked the ground in various directions, and the surplus water made its way down through the yawning fissures, much to the relief of the inhabitants, who had been living

in second stories and on roofs and going about in boats. The poor natives gave all the credit of this providential interference to their patron Our Lady of Guadalupe.

As in other things, so also in the matter of education, did the Church befriend the Indians. In the latter part of the sixteenth century the Jesuits founded a seminary where the natives were taught to read, write and recite prayers to the Virgin and the saints. The University of Mexico, for the education of Creole youth, had been established more than thirty years when this school was begun. About the same time an attempt was made to gather the wandering savage tribes at the North into settled habitations, and to teach them to work as a source of revenue to the colony, and also to quell their constant tendency to rebellion. This proved to be a very difficult task, and more than one mission established for this purpose was destroyed and had its leaders murdered by those whom they came to help.

## CHAPTER XX.

### VICEROYALTY.

THE Indians were not the only sufferers from the grasping policy of Spain. She proved to be in every way an unnatural mother to this the fairest of her Western possessions. Throned between the oceans, with a front on both the eastern and the western hemisphere, a storehouse of the world's richest mineral treasures and blessed with a variety of climate and productions which gave her the advantage of every zone, Mexico should have been the commercial peer of Spain. Humboldt called Mexico *el puente del comercio del mundo* ("the bridge of the commerce of the world"), it being on the direct highway between Europe and Asia. "At one time," says Brantz Mayer, "the East and the West poured their people through the cities of Vera Cruz and Acapulco, and some of the most distinguished merchants of Europe, Asia and Africa met every year in the capital, midway between Spain and China, to transact business and exchange opinions upon the growing facilities of an extended commerce."

The Council of the Indies decided that Mexico herself should derive no benefit from all these natural advantages: she should be simply a colony of miners at work for the mother-country, furnishing a market for her exports. The colonists were forbidden to make any article



in Mexico which Spain could provide. All commerce with other countries, and even with sister-colonies, was prohibited on pain of death. No vessels but those of the mother-country could enter the ports, and these were carefully searched lest contraband articles—especially books—should be concealed among the cargo. Modern history and all political writings were particularly under ban. All spirit of inquiry was stifled. One of our outspoken newspapers would have been considered an infernal machine by the inquisitorial censors of the press, who, through lack of heretics to burn, hunted books. A publishing-house in 1770 had to get special permission to bring over type to print an almanac. As all the small dealers in the country were obliged to report, under oath, the amount of their purchases and sales, perjury and smuggling became national vices. Every article of import was taxed each time it changed hands, and instances were known where such a tax was paid on a single article thirty times before it reached a consumer. Even Nature was repressed in her exuberance. The law frowned upon Mexican grapes and olives if planted by the hand of man, lest some enterprising Creole or Indian might hinder the sale of wine and oil from Spain by engaging in the manufacture of these articles at home.

For many years after the colony was established on this “bridge of the world,” maritime nations of Europe were busy searching for that famous strait to the south seas and other places which had long figured in the geographical romances of Europe. The viceroys of Mexico were anxious to add to the lustre of their reign by some great discovery. At one time rumors of a rich kingdom at the North were brought to the capital by an exploring party led by a Franciscan friar who had been in that

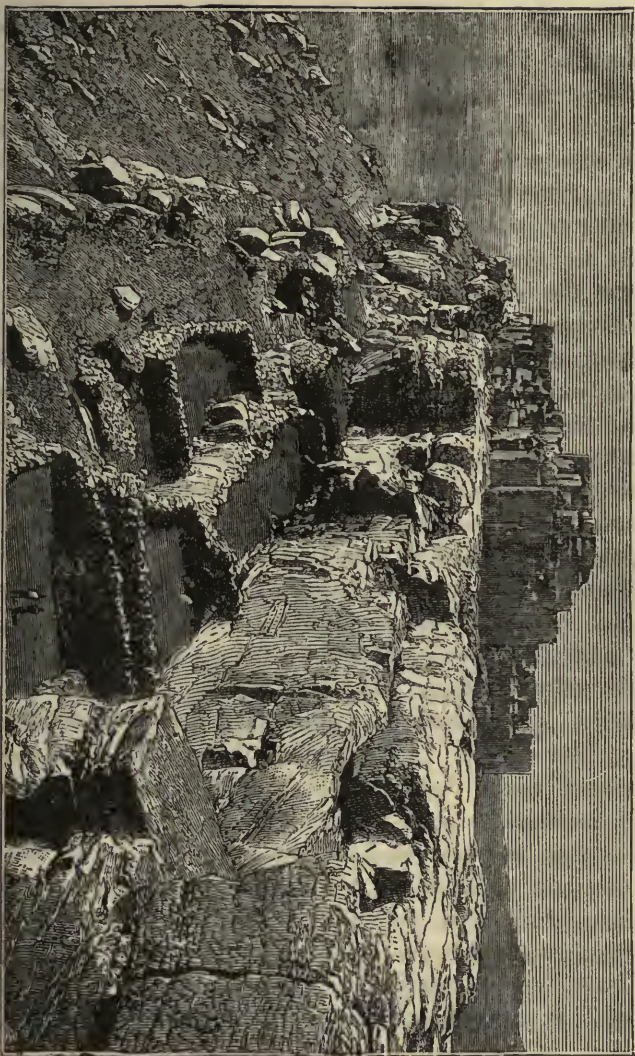
direction. The name of this region was Quivara. Here arose the seven cities of Cibola painted in glowing colors by the monk who first visited them. This romantic story reaching Spain, orders came back to the viceroy to explore and subdue the land without delay. Cortez, who was then living on his Mexican estate, offered to fulfill this task, but was refused. An army was sent out under Coronado, taking the great natural highway leading toward the north over the table-land, where it entered what is now known as New Mexico. Like the seekers after the enchanted islands whose splendid domes and walls lured the mariners of a hundred years before, the soldiers traveled on and on in a fruitless search, wintering twice in the wilderness and coming back disgusted because they found only a community of Indian farmers living in the large pueblos. A few miserable villages still remain to mark the probable site of the cities of Cibola.

Mexico whilst ruled by Spain was never so civilized after the conquest as before. It is recorded of one of the viceroys at the close of the eighteenth century that he caused the streets of the capital to be lighted and drained, and strengthened the police-force of this robber-infested land. Beggary increased under Spanish rule, until at the beginning of this century there were twenty thousand beggars in the capital alone.

Very little was done in the way of public improvement during the three centuries of viceroyalty. There were no roads except such as led from one large city to another, and these were very poor. The nobles and the rich Creoles lived on immense estates called *haciendas*, which separated them widely. One of these gentlemen, who lived on the hills bordering the lowlands, had a *hacienda* ninety miles long by fifty wide. He fitted out

several large vessels yearly, at one time sending over a great shipload of mahogany, and, at another, one of cedar logs, from his own forests, as a present to Philip II. of Spain. Besides these munificent gifts, he sent a princely invitation to the king, declaring that if His Majesty would do him the honor to come back in one of these vessels to Mexico his horse should walk from the shore to the capital on ingots of silver. Millions upon millions of gold and silver produced in the mines were sent abroad and helped to carry on the wars by which Europe was devastated. In the years 1773-74 twenty-six millions of dollars were sent to Spain each year. She had conquered the New World, and was using its enslaved population to help her to lay waste the Old World also. It would be remarkable that during the three hundred years of Spanish government of Mexico and Peru no one of the enemies of Spain despoiled her of those treasure-houses, did we not remember how much easier it was for the cruisers of England and France to capture the Spanish galleons on the high seas than to invade the country and dig the silver and gold from the mines for themselves. As years went on the Church joined the State in its oppressions of the people. The supremacy of the former became the highest aim of the dissolute and avaricious priesthood against which Cortez warned his king. With this one purpose in view, the monks fostered ignorance and compromised with vice, until, like foul and monstrous parasites, these growths well-nigh smothered every vestige of life in the nation.

While Spain was shaping her colonial policy, Rome was in a deadly struggle with the German Reformers. Leo X. was building St. Peter's church; to raise the vast sums of money required in this work, he decided on



A PUEBLO, AS NOW EXISTING IN NEW MEXICO.



an unheard-of exercise of his spiritual power. It was declared that the Church had more of the merits of Christ and the saints than was needed for her ordinary use, and that a surplus was now for sale. Forgiveness of sins could be had for cash, and, as for souls in purgatory, "the moment the money chinked in the box" of a seller of indulgences they were released from suffering for any time specified, and paid for accordingly. Heresy was the only crime which could not be forgiven. No indulgences were so popular as those which condoned lying, stealing and murder. This infamous traffic aroused Luther to a valiant defence of the truth. In 1517, as he nailed his famous theses on the church door at Wittenberg, the sturdy blows of his hammer had resounded throughout Europe, and for years afterward its princes and prelates were battling around the standard of religious liberty which he then raised. But no sound of this warfare seems to have crossed the sea to Mexico. In time we hear of an arrangement between the pope and Charles V. by which Mexican gold was made to flow into the coffers of Rome. The king bought up a large number of indulgences and dispensations and retailed them in New Spain. It was one of the conditions of this wicked traffic that no man should buy more than fifty permissions to steal in one year. "Darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people." Charles made vast sums of money by this monopoly, and in the squabbles which arose between him and his partners as to which was the largest shareholder the pope was beaten. Those who believed that God could thus be bribed to wink at sin had small need of clean hands in doing the work of his Church.

The spirit of inquiry could not have been wholly re-

pressed, for, in 1572, Philip II. thought it necessary to set up a branch of the Spanish Inquisition in Mexico. It is not probable that many victims were looked for among the poor and ignorant natives. Their heathenism was always tolerated by Rome; so long as they went through the forms of obedience they might indulge in pagan rites. But the rich colonists were looked after most carefully. After an existence of over eighty years in Mexico this satanic institution furnished fifty victims to be burned alive at the stake. In 1767, Charles VII. of Spain, convinced that the Jesuits were plotting against him, ordered that the society should be suppressed in every part of his dominions. Sealed despatches were sent to every Spanish colony, to be opened by the authorities on the same day. In April, 1767, when the order took effect, several hundred were sent from Mexico. Even the pope, whose special servants they were, shut his door in their faces. But, though the Jesuits were expelled, the Church establishment continued to engross much of the wealth and power of Mexico. Its ecclesiastics were the chief land-owners and capitalists of the country. The archbishop was the head of a great loan and trust company, and under deeds or mortgages held one-third of the real estate in Mexico. In 1750 it was stated that the amount of money drawn by the Church from this bankrupt nation corresponded to the interest on a capital of one hundred and fifteen millions of dollars.

There are few more sumptuous church-interiors in the world than those of several of the cathedrals of Mexico. The walls of the cathedral of the City of Mexico cost about two millions of dollars. On its massive silver altar within stands a small shrine in which is an image of the Virgin whose three petticoats—one embroidered with pearls, an-

other with emeralds and the third with diamonds—are said to be worth three millions of dollars more. These imposing churches often stand in little villages of adobe huts, the homes of ignorance and squalid poverty. The contrast between the church and its surroundings is all the more striking when we remember that what the village is now it has always been since Rome took possession of Mexico, and nothing could better illustrate the perverted Christianity she has taught its people than these proud shrines, in whose unwholesome shadow they have been sitting for centuries. A picture of Mexico has been given by a visitor from this country in 1846: \* “The things which most strike an American on his first arrival in Mexico are the processions, ceremonies and mummeries of the Catholic worship. As to any rational idea of true religion or any just conception of its divine Author, the great mass are little more enlightened than were their ancestors in the time of Montezuma. Their religion is very little less an idolatry than that of the grotesque images of stone and clay of which it has taken the place.”

Mexico is still one of the darkest corners of the pope's dominions. Nor is this to be wondered at when the character of its priesthood is understood. The abbé Domecch, who accompanied Maximilian to Mexico, speaking of these blind leaders of the blind, says of the Roman Catholic Church as he found it there, “It fills no mission of virtue, no mission of mercy, no mission of charity. Virtue cannot exist in its pestiferous atmosphere. The code of morality does not come within its practice. It knows no mercy, and no emotion of charity ever moves the stony heart of that priesthood which, with an avarice that has no limit, filches the last penny from the diseased

\* *Recollections of Mexico*, by Waddy Thompson.

and dying beggar, plunders the widows and orphans of their substance as well as their virtue, and casts such a horoscope of horrors around the death-bed of the dying millionaire that the poor superstitious wretch is glad to purchase a chance for the safety of his soul by making the Church the heir to his treasures."

All the viceroys but one—who was always known as the "great governor of New Spain"—were foreigners. It was the policy of the mother-country to surround this shadow of a king with a privileged class similar to the old nobility of Europe. They were all of pure Castilian blood and natives of Europe. Their children, if born in Mexico, were Creoles. To these foreigners were granted certain privileges (*fueros*) which in time created a great and impassable barrier between them and the Creoles. The Indians called these people *gatzopins*, or centaurs, afterward corrupted into *gachupines*—a word which may be traced back to the old idea that Spanish horses and men were one animal. These *gachupines* were always looked upon as aliens, as they truly were. All the honors and emoluments in Church and in State were reserved for this privileged class; every law was intended to benefit them. The system of *fueros* which elevated the *gachupines* was extended also to certain classes among the Creoles. Special privileges were thus granted to the army which lifted a soldier almost entirely out of the reach of the civil law and made both officers and men responsible to their commander alone. The clergy owed obedience only to the bishops, and these in turn to the pope of Rome, who kept his hold on the keys of this great treasure-house by entering into a business partnership with the king of Spain. The schools, the engineers, the revenue-officers, and others employed by the govern-



ment, were so fenced about by these peculiar *fueros* that there was a never-ceasing conflict between the central authorities and their irresponsible subjects. The result of these long-fostered evils was constant friction. No difference in blood could create so much bitterness as these odious class-distinctions. *Gachupine* and Creole thoroughly hated each other, while both trod remorselessly on the Indian.

About thirty-five years after the United States threw off its colonial yoke Mexico was aroused from the uneasy sleep of centuries to take a part in the great struggle for liberty then going on in the world. The fall of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain, in 1808, was the death-knell of absolute monarchy in all her colonies. In that year Charles VI. abdicated in favor of his son, Ferdinand VII. This step, taken in haste, would gladly have been retracted, but Ferdinand would not yield. While father and son were quarreling Napoleon interfered and put his brother, Jerome Bonaparte, on the throne, declaring that the house of Bourbon had now ceased to reign. Ferdinand was obliged to sign the decree of the council of the Indies commanding their Mexican colony to obey the usurper. Strange to say, the *gachupines*, those creatures of an absolute monarchy, approved of this measure, but the Creoles, in their intense loyalty, publicly burned Ferdinand's enforced proclamation.

In this emergency the viceroy summoned a junta of the chief men in Church and State. For the first time in their history the Creoles were put upon an equality with the *gachupines* by an invitation to assist at this council. They were delighted, but the old Spaniards were so enraged that they went to the palace of the viceroy and seized him, hurrying him away to prison, where

they kept him three years. These high-handed proceedings proved the ruin of the *gachupines*. The Creoles were determined to uphold Ferdinand, raising seven millions of dollars in a few months to aid the struggling royalists of Spain.

In 1812 the Spanish Cortes enacted a constitution which embodied many such reforms as the freedom of the press, the suppression of the Inquisition, the closing of monasteries and convents, the expulsion of the Jesuits and the cutting off of all privileges belonging exclusively to the army and the nobility. To crown all, the people were invested with power. But long before the ignorant peasantry of Spain could realize their high privileges a counter-revolution had seated Ferdinand on the throne, as firm a believer as ever in

“The right divine of kings to govern wrong.”

He annulled everything the Cortes had done, persecuted those who had in any way aided the people in their cause, revived the Inquisition, and thus plunged the nation into a civil war which lasted six years. In 1820 the people regained their power and compelled the king to swear to support the constitution. There were great rejoicings all over Spain, to which Ferdinand listened in silence. He was a Bourbon of whom it was well said, “They never learn anything, and never forget anything.” The royalists, though in a decided minority, began to plot again, and ere long the perjured king, with the aid of the Church, had regained his despotie power, and a cloud from the Dark Ages seemed for a time to overshadow Spain. Ferdinand was restored once more to his throne and compelled again to swear to support the constitution. Backed by the Holy Alliance, he entered

Madrid as before in royal state, but only to become again false to his God and his country. He revoked all his acts since 1820, re-established the Inquisition and its attendant despotism, and for years Spain was like Mazeppa's horse, struggling to throw its riders, living and dead.

All this time Mexico was a deeply-interested spectator. Loyalty in a Spaniard amounts to religion, and some, even among those who murmured loudest against the exactions of the government, sided with the tyrants they once had upbraided. But, with all the sympathy it received, royal authority in Mexico had received its death-blow. The Creoles had been watching from afar that battle for liberty in which the United States had borne a leading part, and, though not republicans in sentiment, they were determined to put down those odious class-distinctions by which so long they had been debarred from taking their rightful place in the government councils. They were dissatisfied with persons, not with principles, and insisted that natives of the country should have an equal share with foreigners in the management of colonial affairs. But this reasonable request was violently opposed by the *gachupines*.

While the Spaniards were thus at swords' points among themselves over questions of rank, still heavier grievances were adding weight to the old yoke of servitude borne by the Indians. In 1808 a plot was discovered among them to lighten their burdens by securing the independence of Mexico. Foremost among the conspirators was Miguel Hidalgo, the Indian priest, or *cura*, of the little village of Dolores, near San Miguel el Grande. The great uprising under this patriot was the dawn of a new day for Mexico. He was a man of noble presence



MIGUEL HIDALGO.



and great natural ability, "representing the best elements of the people to whom he belonged," having endeared himself to them by a blameless life and by fatherly care over their temporal as well as their spiritual interests. In spite of stringent laws against colonial enterprise, he had encouraged them to make the most of the vegetable treasures with which Mexico is so richly endowed. Under his direction they had cultivated the native silkworm and planted vineyards and olive trees. But the jealousy of the government was aroused. Spanish monopolies could be sustained only by crushing the serfs, soul and body, under foot. Hidalgo saw the olive and mulberry trees of Dolores uprooted by a special order from Mexico, the vineyards laid waste and his people ordered to go back to tasks more befitting their condition as slaves. An oil-and-wine press had been established near by, in Guanajuato, and just then the war in Spain had made oil and wine so scarce and dear that home manufacture was much encouraged and very profitable. New hope had sprung up, therefore, among the small planters throughout the district of Salamanca, when the police-force came upon them, tore down the mill and destroyed the stock of the proprietor.

The long-pent-up hatred toward the conquerors now burst forth with redoubled strength. Hidalgo had become one of a band of conspirators scattered throughout the country who had plotted to make Mexico independent. For years he had been brooding over the wrongs of his people, when the outrages at Guanajuato and Dolores fired him with new zeal and courage. The war-cry would soon have sounded, when, by the treachery of one of the band, the plan was exposed. The man was suddenly taken ill, and, fearing that he was

about to die, he confessed all to the priest. Most of the clergy were hand in hand with the tyrants, and this one of the fraternity, though bound by oath not to reveal the secrets of the confessional, lost no time in spreading the news.

Tidings came to Hidalgo late one evening in December. Not a moment was to be lost. Messengers were sent to the captain of a regiment, La Rexia, near by, who was also one of the conspirators. He came with his men early the next morning, and the standard of Mexican independence hastily set up before the curate's door attracted all eyes. The villagers flew to arms. In twelve days twenty thousand Indians had gathered about this new flag, the first that had roused any enthusiasm since the old tribal banners had been laid low. They were a motley crowd, armed with slings, bows, clubs, lances and the *machêtes*, or hoes, with which they tilled the soil. Very few besides the soldiers had muskets or knew how to handle them. Hidalgo put on a general's dress and marched at the head of the mob to Guanajuato. Every ranche and every hamlet on the way had furnished new recruits to join the wild shout, "Death to the *gachupines* and independence for Mexico!" Then Hidalgo arrested the *gachupines*. The whole city was in an uproar. The next morning he presented his cause to the people and carried all hearts before him. The citizens rose almost to a man and joined the insurgents.

But the partisans of Hidalgo were a cruel and lawless mob. Unused to war, they could not be held in check, and divided councils soon imperiled the cause so righteously begun. On the march to the capital his army increased to one hundred thousand men. The leading classes were by this time in arms against them, and their

very numbers were an obstacle to their success. Orders had been given in Mexico to kill all the men, women and children in any town or village which should show favor to the rebels. The brutal general Callega, who carried out the government orders, wreaked its utmost vengeance on Guanajuato. He is said to have butchered at one time, in cold blood, fourteen thousand prisoners in that city alone.

Hidalgo was permitted to baptize the cause so dear to his heart only with a martyr's blood. He was making his way toward the United States, hoping for shelter there till his plans could be better arranged, but he was betrayed and captured, deposed from his priesthood and shot at Chihuahua, July 30, 1811.

True as was Hidalgo's devotion to his country, he fought against an enemy whose right arm he was blindly upholding. This was shown by his unswerving loyalty to that Church whose corruption and lust of power have ever made her a fit ally for despots. During the revolutionary struggles which followed Hidalgo's death the people began to see that their Spanish masters had no more faithful friends and allies than the Romish priesthood. Hidalgo's enthusiastic love for the Church was echoed by the first Mexican Congress, which met in 1812, the year after his death. They declared that the Catholic religion only should be recognized and allowed in the State, and that the press should be free except for the discussion of religious matters. Slavery was abolished, privileges of birth and color were annulled, the property of the *gachupines* was confiscated, and a representative government of natives was inaugurated.

The cause of liberty did not die with Hidalgo. While

still hopeful of success he had commissioned Morelos, an Indian priest, as captain-general of the insurgent force at the South. After the death of Hidalgo the chief command devolved on his brother-patriot.

The royalists had entered on a war of extermination, and not a town or a village dared shelter the rebels. Morelos resolved to tire out his enemies by changing the scene of conflict to the hot lands on the coast, where the men of the cold regions would melt away with its deadly fevers.

At one time, on a retreat to Oaxaca, Morelos hoped to find shelter for his troops in a little town surrounded by a deep moat. As they came to the bank with the enemy in hot pursuit they saw, to their dismay, that the draw-bridge was raised and the better to prevent their entrance the townspeople had secured every boat. Seizing an axe, Guadalupe Victoria, afterward first president of the republic, sprang into the stream, and in the sight of the panic-stricken crowd on the opposite bank he swam boldly across, cut the ropes which held the bridge aloft, and as it came down with a thundering crash Morelos and his men dashed over and took possession of the place.

A story is told of Miguel Bravo, another of the patriots, that shows the spirit which animated many of these noble men. Three hundred prisoners had fallen into their hands at the siege of Palmo, and General Morelos gave the disposal of them to Bravo, who immediately offered them all to the viceroy in exchange for his father, Don Leonardo Bravo, then a prisoner under sentence of death at the capital. But the viceroy rejected the offer and ordered the execution to take place immediately. When Bravo heard the sad news, he set his three hundred men at liberty, saying, "I wish to put it out of my power to



avenge my father's death lest in the first moments of my grief the temptation to do so would prove irresistible."\*

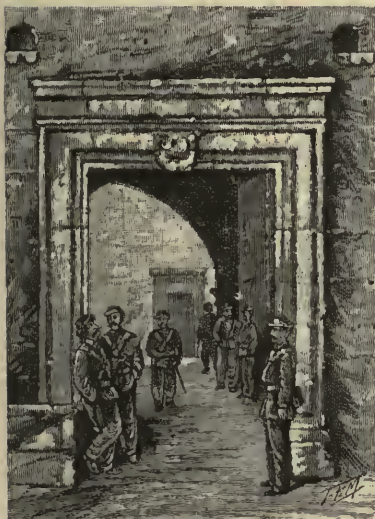
A national Congress which had been summoned to organize an independent government had not yet finished its work when the members were driven out of Chilpanzinco, where they were in session. Morelos led them to a dense forest, and there, hidden in the shadow of its great trees, the declaration of Mexican independence and its first constitution were drawn up. Before the work was completed an alarm was given, "The royalists are upon us!" Hastily gathering up their precious documents, the men fled, and Morelos and his handful of patriots, closing in behind them, held until they were beyond pursuit the pass through which they were flying. Morelos heroically stood his ground until but one man remained at his side. Then, when forced to surrender, he said calmly, "My race is run when an independent government is established in Mexico." He was condemned to be shot for high treason. As he knelt beside the grave already yawning to receive his body, his faith turned from the saints and the Virgin, who were the objects of prayer and adoration for generations, and he cried out to Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man, exclaiming with his last breath,

"Lord, if I have done well, thou knowest it; if ill, to thine infinite mercy I commend my soul!"

\* Ward's *Mexico*, vol. i. p. 204.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE.



THE fall of Morelos seemed a death-blow to the insurgents. Under his bold leadership men of different ranks in society and of varying shades of opinion had marched shoulder to shoulder, Creole and Indian, priest and layman, monarchist and republican, united by one bond only—"Death to *gachupines* and independence for Mexico!"

But now all these were scattered to the four winds. In the guerilla-warfare that became general during the reign of anarchy which followed, the *Indios bravos*, or savage tribes, had their opportunity. The open country was given up to banditti, and every ranche and every hacienda was a citadel in danger of siege. The cities were so infested with robbers that the streets were deserted at nightfall, and few rich men escaped being kidnapped for the heavy ransom extorted from

their families. But men were thinking. The standard of liberty raised by Hidalgo had floated over the capital but sixty-six days, yet during that time the liberals had used the just-unfettered press to great advantage. Newspapers and handbills were scattered with a lavish hand, and truths were taught that burned in the hearts of men like smouldering fire, needing only one breath of free air to kindle into flame.

One of those who stood by when Morelos was put to death was Agustin Iturbide, a handsome, dashing young officer from the hills of Valladolid, in Southern Mexico. He had commanded the government troops when the patriot was captured.

In 1820, when the news of the revolution in Spain sent a thrill throughout the colonies, the viceroy of Mexico received orders from the Council of the Indies to proclaim throughout his dominions that the constitution enacted by the Spanish Cortes in 1812 was again the law of the land. Anxious lest his own power should be curtailed, and counting on the support of all the royalists in Mexico, Apodaca resolved to oppose these measures, and so far as was in his power to reinstate the Bourbons on the throne. But Iturbide, though a thoroughgoing royalist, saw fit to disobey both Apocada and the Cortes. Whatever may have been his motives, God's time had come for another blow to be struck for the independence of Mexico, and Iturbide, though an enemy of true liberty, was the instrument prepared for the work.

Leagued with the Church party, Iturbide contrived to get possession of half a million dollars of public money, and proceeded to set up a new kingdom on these Western shores with the design of perpetuating here the old despotism of Europe, and at the same time to free

Mexico from dependence on the mother-country. He devised what is known as the "plan of Iguala," so named from the little town near Acapulco where it was first set forth. Three ideas are embodied in this plan—first, Mexican independence; second, the abolition of caste; third, the maintenance of the Roman Catholic Church. The country was to be governed by a junta, or council, until there could be imported from Europe a king whose blue blood would command the respect of all parties.

Priests and monks were now in love with Mexican independence. Church property had been confiscated in Spain, and there was good reason to fear that the vast estates, jewels, money and plate of the Church in Mexico would soon go the same way if the ties which held the two countries together were not sundered. Indeed, the Spanish Cortes had already commanded the Mexican prelates to disgorge their ill-gotten gains. It may well be supposed that Iturbide's response to the viceroy's orders aroused the slumbering hopes of every revolutionist in the land. With the eight hundred men with whom he started and thousands more who joined him on the way, the gay young general came marching into the capital with banners and music, and once more the war-cry of Hidalgo rang out through the streets of Mexico.

Iturbide found the Cortes torn with the dissensions of three parties, each eagerly claiming his support. A few urged a return to the old Bourbon principle of one-man power; other royalists insisted that, whoever was king, Mexico should have a constitutional government; and others, again, wished to throw overboard all these monarchists and establish a republic, taking the United States



as an example. The tide of enthusiasm over the revolution ran high, with Iturbide on its topmost wave.

The scattered patriots who fought under Hidalgo and Morelos now came out of their hiding-places to join in the shout of "Independence for Mexico!" Among these was Guadalupe Victoria. After the death of his friend Morelos every effort had been made by the government to seduce this brave patriot. He was offered high rank in the army and a rich reward if he would swear allegiance to viceregal authority. But he could not be bought. A price was set on his head, and he was hunted like a wild beast. Deserted at last by every follower, Victoria fled to the most inaccessible mountains, to retreats where his Indian friends did not follow him. Here, in utter loneliness, he lived for two years a hermit's life, subsisting only on nuts, berries, roots and such birds and animals as he could entrap. He was one of that great army of martyrs for truth who in all ages and lands have been "destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); who wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

When the news of Iturbide's proclamation rang through Mexico, two faithful Indian followers went in search of Victoria to tell him of the new day which had dawned for their country. It was just three hundred years since the heel of the oppressor had been set on the neck of their race. Hope of freedom *from* their foreign masters had long since died out, but hope of freedom *with* them was now bringing Creole and Indian into new fellowship, and for the first time in the history of Mexico the two races rejoiced together.

Victoria's retreat was at last discovered in a cave in one of the wild gorges spanned now by the national



HIGH BRIDGE ON THE MEXICO AND VERA CRUZ RAILWAY.

bridge on the Mexican Railway between Vera Cruz and Mexico city. When he came back to the haunts of civilized men, he was worn to a skeleton and so covered with hair that his nearest friends at first did not recognize him except by the old fire which gleamed in his eye and the dauntless courage with which he sprang at once to the welcome task of redeeming Mexico from her old fetters.

Iturbide's arrival in the capital had so roused the populace there that the viceroy was obliged to acknowledge the independence of Mexico to save the *gachupines* from violence. When this was reported in Spain, the timid official was promptly recalled; but the man sent to fill his place fared no better in the hands of his new subjects. Mexico had for ever shaken off the yoke of Spain, and was now launched on the stormy sea of revolution as an independent nation. To conciliate their old rulers, and at the same time to carry out their plan, the Mexicans despatched an invitation to the Bourbons to send one of their spare princes over to fill the new throne. But not one of them would accept the offer. In the general confusion which ensued, a grateful people, dazzled by the splendid qualities of their liberator, Iturbide, on May 1, 1822, pushed him into the seat just vacated by the viceroy, giving him the title of "emperor." The Mexican Congress, glad to see any way open toward a settlement, legalized this disorderly movement of the people, gave Iturbide the title "Agustin I.," declared his crown hereditary and conferred royal honors on the whole Iturbide family. An order of nobility was created, so that the regalia of a Creole nobleman could equal—in glitter, at least—the regalia worn by the long-envied *gachupines*.

Agustin I. might have gained a firm footing for him-

self and for his children but for the arrogance with which he treated his new subjects and for his indifference to their constitutional rights. He soon quarreled with the Cortes and arrested a number of the members, then dissolved the body and replaced it with a set of men who would obey him without question. These high-handed proceedings opened the eyes of the people to the true character of their favorite. The northern provinces were first to turn upon him; he was now styled "the usurper Iturbide." Santa Anna, governor of Vera Cruz, uniting with Guadalupe Victoria, joined the disaffected party and hoisted the flag of the republic; and when troops were sent from Mexico by the emperor to put down the revolt, they too joined his enemies. Iturbide saw his mistake when it was too late. In March, 1823, after a reign of only ten months, he offered his abdication to the old Congress. Congress ignored the fact that he had ever worn a crown, but accorded him the honor due to his first title—"Liberator of Mexico"—and sent him and his family quietly over-sea on a pension of twenty thousand dollars a year.

One more sad act, and the curtain falls on poor Iturbide. Too restless to stay in Italy, whither he had betaken himself, the ex-emperor secretly came back, hoping, no doubt, to gain his old place in the hearts of his countrymen. He was discovered by one of his former generals, arrested as an outlaw by the State of Tamaulipas under a law passed by Congress forbidding him on pain of death to set foot on Mexican soil, and shot by State authority.

The year 1824 is one of the bright points in this dreary history of turbulence. About that time a galaxy of Spanish colonies had declared for independence—



Chili, New Granada, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela. The spirit of republicanism had been spreading like fire on dry grass. Mexico for the first time decided to be a republic, and was formally recognized as such by Spain. In the constitution which the whole country then adopted, although patterned after that of the United States, the people show themselves still ignorant of the first principle of liberty. All religions but the Roman Catholic faith were prohibited, the property of the clergy was put beyond the reach of secular law, and none but *gachupines* were allowed to fill high offices in the Church.

The republican reaction after the fall of Iturbide resulted in the expulsion of the old Spaniards from the country. When the Spanish flag was hauled down from the castle of San Juan d'Ulúa, not a vestige remained of the old colonial power of Spain, this fortress, her last foothold on this coast, having held out against the revolutionists several years longer than any other part of the country. By a strange ordering of Providence, its keys were finally given into the hands of General Barrancas, the husband of a lineal descendant of the Aztec chief Montezuma. The fall of this castle was thus announced by the president of the republic in his proclamation: "The standard of the republic now waves over the castle of Ulúa! I announce to you, fellow-citizens, with indescribable pleasure, that now, after a lapse of three hundred and four years, the flag of Castile has disappeared from our coasts." Thus ended what is known as "the war of independence." Mexico was now a member of the family of nations, and, though still wearing the fetters of the greatest despotism on earth, had already entered on that mighty struggle for constitu-

tional liberty which after a lapse of more than forty years has ended in its complete overthrow.

It would be perplexing and unsatisfactory to trace the varying fortunes of those professed friends of Freedom in Mexico who

“Presumed to lay their hands upon the ark  
Of her magnificent and awful cause.”

The story of Benito Juarez, the reformer of Mexico, will give all needed details of its revolutionary struggles and show that, as liberty there had its birthplace in the heart of one Indian, so it reached its glorious consummation through the undying and incorruptible patriotism of another.

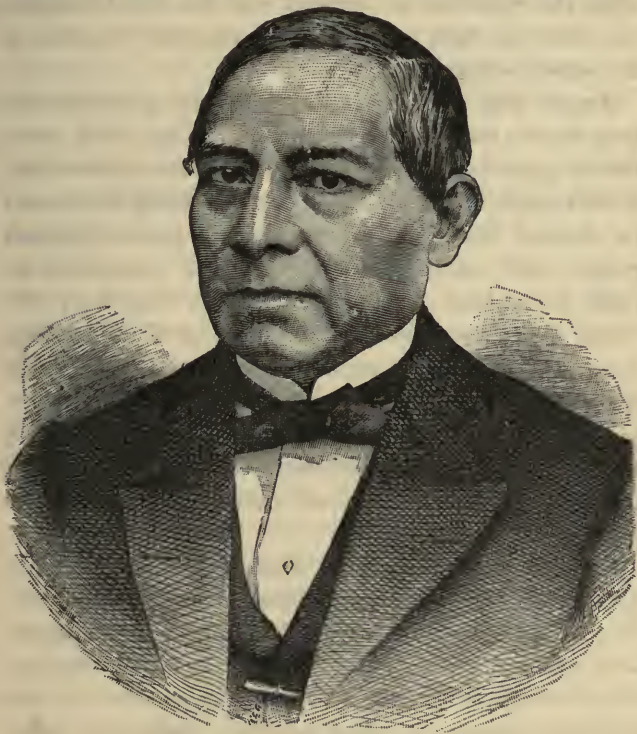
Benito Juarez was a pure-blooded Zapotec Indian, born in 1806 in the little village of San Pablo Guetatao, among the mountains of Oaxaca. His tribe held the lands of its fathers and maintained a sturdy independence during three hundred years of colonial oppression. This was one of the tribes before whom the proud Aztecs trembled. A few of the men now spoke Spanish well enough to do business when they took their produce to market, but the women and children understood only their old Indian tongue. Young Juarez thus grew up in the atmosphere of the past. The simple herdmen among whom he lived went on the even tenor of their way when Hidalgo raised the standard of independence among the uprooted vines and mulberry trees of his parish, though their hearts were no doubt stirred with the thought that it was an Indian's hand which had lifted their trailing banner, and that one of the same despised race might yet plant it beyond the reach of a Spaniard's grasp.

The lad Benito had already won a reputation for honesty and enterprise when he went, an orphan boy, to Oaxaca, in 1818, to seek his fortune. He was then but twelve years old, modest and thoughtful beyond his years. His great desire was to obtain an education, as many of his own people had done at that time. He could neither read nor speak Spanish correctly. He soon found a place as a house-servant in the family of a teacher, and paid with his services for his board and schooling. In a year's time he had mastered Spanish and was studying Latin. His teacher, who had resolved to make a priest of young Juarez, put him in an ecclesiastical seminary near by.

On the threshold of his public life, Juarez caught a glimpse of the deep-rooted hatred of Rome for that which leads the people to think for themselves. In 1826 the State Legislature gave expression to its liberal principles by founding the Institute of Arts and Sciences of the State of Oaxaca. The fears of the priests were not groundless: the institute proved to be a focus of revolution and so-called heresy.

Miguel Mendez, a young friend of Juarez, was among the first to forsake the seminary for the broader field of thought and action opening at the institute. He too was a pure-blooded Indian, a youth whose fine talents and noble character were full of promise for his race and his country. A warm friendship which sprang up between the two young men no doubt influenced Juarez to abandon his studies for the priesthood. Mendez, however, was cut off in the morning of his days. His early death made an impression upon Juarez which was never effaced through those long and eventful years in which he was permitted to illustrate to the world the great possibilities

of the Indian character. Juarez had found a home and a congenial circle of friends. His horizon widened; he became an intelligent defender of those principles of social



BENITO JUAREZ.

and political reform which were then agitating the civilized world.

At twenty-three Juarez was elected to the chair of natural philosophy in the institute, and, still pursuing his legal studies, he came out in 1828 a full-fledged attorney. From this time he rose rapidly, until, after



filling several positions of honor and trust, he was chosen as one of the triumvirate which governed Oaxaca when it seceded from the monarchists under Paredes. Finally, when that rebellion was crushed and the republic again rose from the dust, he was sent to represent his State in the general Congress.

Juarez and his friends did not come a moment too soon to save their country from ruin. The selfish ambition of party-leaders overruled every other consideration. Public credit was at its lowest ebb. Nothing more could be drained from the overtaxed and poverty-stricken people, and, although the government repudiated its debts, it had been obliged to call on the Church to give money as well as prayers for the defence of the country. An appeal to the great banker of the nation was a necessity. At this time it held untaxable property in lands, plate, jewels and money worth three hundred millions, with an annual income of twenty-five millions, besides mortgages on real estate all over the country which yielded millions more.

In this time of national distress one of the purest patriots of Mexico, Farias, proposed that fourteen millions of dollars should be raised on this Church property—if possible, by a loan; but if that could not be obtained, to sell enough of it to raise that amount. The bill was fiercely attacked as a radical measure. Juarez and others pleaded eloquently in its behalf. We can imagine some of their arguments as they looked on thousands of lazy and dissolute monks fattening on the spoil of centuries, while poor laborers and mechanics forced to leave their families for the perils and hardships of the battlefield had been so long unpaid that the whole army was in a state of revolt. The burning words with which this bill

was commended to Congress carried it through by a small majority among the politicians, but the people were too wild with anxiety to know much of Juarez, their great defender, until years had proved his worth and given him a place among the world's great reformers. The churchmen, having failed in the defence of their property, now appealed to the passions of the mob. There were riots in the capital and elsewhere. Yucatan seceded and Indian raids harassed the northern States, while foreign guns thundering against Mexican ports along both the Gulf and the Pacific shores added their terrors to the scene. Some great public calamity was needed in this crisis by which these warring States and people should be united by a sense of common danger to defend their country against a common enemy.

Amid all this fierce internal strife, Mexico was drawn into a war with her powerful neighbor the United States. Until boundary questions were settled between the two countries, in 1819, the Rio Grande had been claimed as the southern border of Louisiana. To rejoin this vast territory, justly yielded then to Spain, and to devote it to the extension of slavery, had become the aim of a large party in the United States. There was room in the cotton- and the sugar-producing lands of Texas and the country west of it for a tier of States larger than all New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.

When Mexico became a republic, slavery was prohibited in its first constitution, although in Texas this law had been a dead letter. There was now a growing public sentiment against all class-distinctions which led to the re-enactment, in 1825, of an old viceregal law against the sale and importation of slaves. Two years later the

twin-States of Texas and Coahuila, governed by a joint Legislature, passed a similar law; freedom was also given to all children born in slavery within their bounds after that date. In 1829 every slave in Mexico was unconditionally manumitted.

The drift of these events caused great uneasiness among the American colonists in Texas, who by this time had so increased in numbers and in influence as to have a controlling voice in the politics of that State, although its union with Coahuila was a constant hindrance to their schemes. The avowed purpose of the Texans to wrest the State from Mexico led the government in 1830 to shut the door against further immigration from the North. Contracts between citizens of the two countries were as far as possible ignored, and all who resisted the laws were imprisoned. The fierce border warfare to which this policy gave rise led, first, to the severing of the tie between the rebellious State and loyal Coahuila, and then to the independence of Texas and its recognition by France, England and the United States. And now the "Lone Star" of a new republic shone out across the stormy sea of American politics. How little hope it brought to the friends of human progress may be seen from the fact that of the fifty-seven signers to its declaration of independence fifty were men from the United States pledged to extend the area of slavery. By a law passed a few days afterward this institution was declared to be perpetual.

This formidable revolt drew the attention of all Mexico to the North. President Santa Anna set out for San Antonio de Béjar—then occupied by the Texans—with all the forces he could muster. The brutality of Mexican warfare was displayed in the siege of the Ala-

mo, a strong fortress near the town. With the exception of three persons—a woman, her child and a negro servant—the whole garrison, numbering one hundred and eighty, were mercilessly slaughtered. This massacre cost Mexico far more than the men whose lives were lost. A few days afterward the Texans defeated Santa Anna at San Jacinto, taking as spoils of war all the land which but a short time before the United States had offered to buy, and extending their borders southward to the Rio Grande. But, greatest loss of all, the lawlessness and the barbarity of her leaders now stood confessed before all the world, alienating those whose sympathies she most needed and giving enemies of republicanism fresh occasion to triumph.

Mexico had now been for nearly thirty years struggling toward freedom. Much of the time the cause of the people had been lost sight of save by a few patriots who deserved the name. The blindness, the ignorance and the folly of her political leaders had excited now the world's pity and now its scorn or anger.

About ten years after the scenes of the Alamo all eyes were turned to where the forces of Mexico and those of the United States were gathering for conflict on the debatable land between the two nations. As an independent republic, Texas was much dreaded by the United States, as she might at any time fraternize with Mexico or accept an English protectorate, which was quite as much to be feared. The annexation of Texas by the United States, in 1845, led before long to war with Mexico. That government had never recognized the independence of her revolted State. She had good reason, besides, to know that Texas proper was but a small part of the territory coveted by her neighbor:



California also was threatened. The Hon. Waddy Thompson, United States minister to Mexico, testifies that when the Mexican government ordered the expulsion of his countrymen from California "a plot was arranged, and was about being developed by the Americans and other foreigners in that department, to re-enact the scenes of Texas." That he felt "compunctious visitings" when he insisted that Mexico should revoke the order to expel those who were plotting her ruin is not to be wondered at. Pretexts for war were not wanting when it was found that Mexico would not sell nor pawn her property. It was claimed that she was encouraging Indian raids into Texas, and the "accumulated wrongs" of American citizens were also dwelt upon. These could be atoned for only by the payment of a total of fourteen millions of dollars. After examination by a commission appointed by the two governments in 1840, five-sevenths of these claims were found to be spurious. Between this decision and the actual commencement of hostilities, in 1845, scheming politicians of the United States were doing their utmost to gain possession of Texas and California.

The annexation of Texas was no sooner consummated than the Mexican minister in Washington demanded his passports and went home. United States troops sent for the protection of Texas had already taken a position on soil claimed by Mexico. While thus menacing the border the administration in Washington despatched an envoy to Mexico empowered to make an offer of twenty-five millions of dollars for California. Tempting as was this offer, the Mexican government refused to hear of anything but a settlement of the Texan question. This rebuff was followed by an order from the United States

government to General Taylor to march directly to the Rio Grande and try war.

It does not fall within the purpose of this volume to describe the scenes of bloodshed which marked this two years' conflict with Mexico. Peace was concluded between the two nations at Guadalupe Hidalgo in February, 1848. Mexico ceded to the United States an area of more than six hundred and fifty thousand square miles. In consideration of this, the United States paid her fifteen millions of dollars and assumed the payment of her debts to American citizens not exceeding two and a quarter millions.\* California had been seized in 1846 without the loss of a single life.

Juarez was left by our narrative pleading for means to carry on war with the United States, while Santa Anna, at the North, was endeavoring to stay the enemy's advance. The clergy, unmindful of the nation's peril, were stirring up insurrection at home, which was quelled only by the return of Santa Anna. Taking sides with the enraged priests, this arch-plotter found the opportunity for self-advancement which he was ever seeking. With the army behind him, he became dictator, and dissolved the Congress. In the uproar which followed in the State of Oaxaca and elsewhere, Juarez was sent home to restore order. He was immediately elected governor, which office he filled for five years with great acceptance.

While at home among his own people Juarez became known as one of the ablest and most patriotic statesmen in the republic. He found Oaxaca in wild disorder. The

\* The war cost the United States the lives of twenty thousand men and the expenditure of one hundred and sixty millions of dollars.

conservatives had seized every office and bade defiance to constitutional law. The State forces had been defeated at Molino del Rey, and it had been invaded by United States troops. But when the strong hand of Juarez was felt at the helm, rightful authority was everywhere restored. With the energy and practical common sense for which he was noted, he set the people at work to provide arms and ammunition wherewith to defend their State. He established a foundry, and with ore dug from their own hills a battery was soon provided. By patient and systematic economy the public debt was wiped out before his term of office expired, and a balance of fifty thousand dollars was left in the treasury. Juarez retired to the practice of law as poor and as modest as when he first left it for public service, but more loved and honored.

While fulfilling the duties of his office as governor with unflinching regard for the public weal, Juarez offended Santa Anna. When the latter came once more into power, in 1853, he immediately caused Juarez's arrest. He was seized while pleading in court, and, without being allowed to take leave of his family, was hurried away to a loathsome prison-cell in the castle of San Juan d'Ulua, and from thence he was sent, a penniless exile, on board of a British steamer to work his passage to New Orleans. It was soon the dictator's turn to flee for his life. The country called back its old leader from exile, and in July, 1855, we find Juarez in Acapulco on the road to Mexico. His old friend General Alvarez was now president of the republic, and Juarez was made minister of justice. He now found himself side by side with men who were clinging to the army as the safeguard of the nation, together with those

who believed that the Church should be independent of secular law.

But the trust of Juarez was in the people. Six-sevenths of them were at his back. What if some of them did not yet see in him their appointed deliverer? He was none the less responsible for their salvation. His keen eye had from the outset detected the weak spot in the constitution of the republic; it was in open conflict with that fundamental principle of liberty that all men are equal before the law. Until the army and the clergy were shorn of those special privileges which enabled them to bid defiance to constitutional authority the republic would be a failure. What Mexico needed was "a government of the people for the people by the people." This thought was embodied in the famous law for the administration of justice now known by the name of its Indian author—"the law of Juarez." The keynote of progress was struck on the passage of this bill by the Mexican Congress in 1857, and millions of the long-enslaved people of Mexico joined in the shout of joy with which it was received. This law awoke the bitterest opposition from those classes whose privileges it attacked.

Juarez was now dismissed from the cabinet as a dangerously popular man, to serve his State again as governor. But his enemies and his timid friends thus gave him an opportunity to put his theories into practice. He immediately set to work to educate his fellow-citizens up to the true idea of liberty. He built up the common schools, encouraged the Institute and urged upon the people the principle, untried before, of direct suffrage in the election of their governor. The grateful people of Oaxaca exercised their new privilege by electing



Juarez as the first constitutional governor of their State, and soon after he was chosen chief-justice of the nation. Only a month later, by an overwhelming pressure of public opinion, Comonfort, who was then dictator, was obliged to make him minister of public government. One of the first duties of Juarez in this high position was to ask extraordinary powers for the executive. Congress hesitated, and but for the confidence felt in Juarez as a member of the cabinet the request would have been denied.

The outcome of the reformer's seed-sowing at this time was the suppression of the Jesuits, the confiscation of their property, and liberty for all religious creeds. These radical measures evoked rebellion even in the liberal camp, and Comonfort himself joined the insurgents. The triumph of the "old régime" seemed complete; the capital, the army and the treasury were in their hands. In the near future was a European protectorate.

As early as 1858 the clericals had sent agents to Europe to ask for aid in establishing a monarchy. They represented that peace between the contending parties was impossible, that the liberals would throw the country into the hands of the United States, and that the only hope of warding off annexation was by strengthening the hands of the Church. Mexico was deeply in debt to England, to France and to Spain, and these powers now agreed on a scheme of intervention. The pretext was an act of the Mexican Congress passed in 1860 authorizing a suspension of payment of the public debt for two years. It was a desperate measure and unlike Juarez, who proposed it, but the only thing possible under the circumstances, and as such was unanimously approved by the members.

The allies took the opportunity to carry their scheme into effect while the United States had its hands full with a civil war. In 1861 their fleet appeared off Vera Cruz. Finding, on their arrival, that the people of Mexico were opposed to their interference, had repudiated the schemes of the monarchists and if let alone could manage their own affairs, the English and the Spanish forces were withdrawn without waiting to consult the authorities in Europe. The French, however, remained. Louis Napoleon was ambitious to show his skill in settling the vexed Mexican question; he had a wife who was anxious to show her devotion to the Church of Rome by rescuing this portion of the flock from the clutches of the heretics. The door seemed open.

After the departure of their allies the French army crossed the mountains to the capital, and there set up a provisional government. It was their decision that a prince must be imported from Europe to rule this refractory people, and the choice of the man was left to Napoleon III. With his inherited taste for king-making, the French emperor gladly set about the task. He soon fixed upon Maximilian, a young archduke of Austria, then residing with his wife, Carlotta of Belgium, in a beautiful and happy home on the shores of the Adriatic.

When the Mexican ambassadors came to offer him a crown, Maximilian looked coldly on the proposal; but Carlotta, like Eugenie of France, loved her Church and as a sincere Catholic was deeply moved by the sad story of her visitors. They told of a beautiful land most loyal to the Church; how its churches and its monasteries had been despoiled by ungrateful children; but

that now the nation, though rent with faction, the prey of heretical wolves, needed only a royal hand to bring it safely and soundly into the fold of mother-Church. The young couple were persuaded to accept the invita-



CHURCH OF SAN DOMINGO, CITY OF MEXICO.

tion. After securing the benediction of the pope, they set sail for America on their pious errand, and arrived in Vera Cruz in June, 1864. A magnificent welcome awaited them from the clerical party, and even the people, united as they were in their protest against foreign

intervention, received the fair Carlotta with smiles. The royal pair were heralded from point to point on their mountain-road by the thunder of guns and the waving of banners. It was a time of great rejoicing to the monarchists of Mexico and of Europe.

But now began the war of intervention; the war of reform had ended in 1860. Throughout both these conflicts Rome displayed her antagonism to the liberty for which Mexico was struggling. To see this we have only to read the instructions given by the pope to Maximilian. Reminding the new-made emperor of his promise to protect the Church, Pope Pius IX. claims for her the right to rule not only over individuals, but over nations, peoples and sovereigns. He denies the right of private judgment to the people and justifies emphatically all the cruel persecutions which have made Rome "drunk with the blood of the saints." His fierce denunciations remind us of that impious usurper whom in prophetic vision Paul beheld sitting in the temple of God and setting himself forth as God.

It was against foreign intervention of popes and kings that the constitutionalists of Mexico had now taken up arms. Stimulated by the unswerving faith and patriotism of Benito Juarez, a small party pledged to support the constitutional rights of the people rallied about him. He had voiced the advanced thought of the age, and was determined to live and to die by it. After he was forced to evacuate the capital, in 1863, he was for four years a fugitive, fleeing from city to city with a handful of brave patriots who constituted the republican government. What with timid friends and malicious foes, he seemed at times to stand alone, as though the republic existed only in the faithful heart of its Indian president.

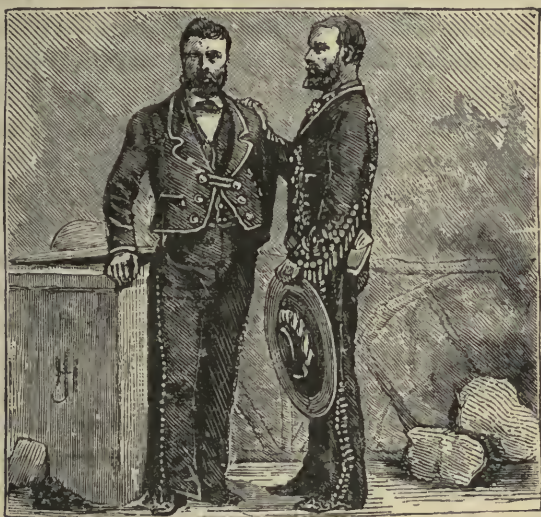


When he was penned up in some city on the borders or hiding in the wilderness, if he could not do anything else, he would keep alive the wavering faith of friends abroad and write words of dauntless courage and sublime trust in the future of his country. For two years and a half while Juarez and his cabinet were in the State of Chihuahua they had no communication with their many friends in the South and the West except through Señor Romero, their faithful minister in Washington.

The liberals averaged a battle a day for a whole year. Unaided and unrecognized save when a friendly cheer came now and then from some sister-republic at the North or the South, Mexico's battle for freedom was fought alone. In our war for independence France came to the rescue and turned the scale. Poor Mexico! Ridiculed, upbraided, despaired of, yet when was there ever a braver, truer struggle for liberty than was hers? Thrilled by the voice of a few patriot-statesmen—themselves poor and hunted like deer in the forest, yet determined to break down the barriers to the nation's progress—six millions of people who could neither read nor write, with the fetters of paganism still clinging to them, and with burdens of poverty and debt which found no helper, arose against their enemies and successfully grappled with the craft and greed and despotism of Rome, and the well-trained soldiery of France, and the timidity and ambition of would-be leaders.

No trumpet that Juarez blew ever had an uncertain sound. With that tenacity of purpose which is so characteristic of his race, the salvation of the republic became with him a master-passion. At one time, when enemies in disguise were urging him to yield to the mediation of England, he saw in their proposition a compromise with

the clericals. His reply was worthy of an indomitable patriot. Declaring his unalterable purpose to be governed only by the will of the nation, lawfully expressed, he uttered these memorable words: "I am not the chief of a party: I am the lawful representative of the nation. The instant I set aside law my powers cease and my mission is ended. I cannot—I do not desire to, and must not—make any compromise whatever. The moment I



MEXICAN OFFICERS.

should do so my constituents would cease to acknowledge me, because I have sworn to support the constitution, and I sustain with entire confidence the public opinion. When this shall be manifested to me in a different sense, I shall be the first to acknowledge its sovereign deliberations."

There were rifts at last in the dark cloud which hung

over the republic. Discord in the capital among its enemies was the means appointed by God for the deliverance of the patriots. The only support given to the empire was from the clericals, who hoped that when Maximilian was firmly seated on his throne he would restore to the Church party their lost estates. But the emperor soon discovered that he had been deceived by these monarchists. The people had repudiated the monarchical form of government and were opposed to foreign rule either in Church or in State. Although very friendly to the priests, Maximilian chose to conciliate the liberals, whose power he recognized, hoping thus to unite all parties. To please them, therefore, he determined to sustain the national laws enacted in 1857. This gave mortal offence to the Church in Mexico, though the French priests who accompanied the court saw the propriety of the measure. Several of the largest buyers of Church property sold under that law were French subjects. The pope agreed with the Mexican priesthood, who declared that they were worse off under the empire than they had been under the republic. They finally gave vent to their feelings by excommunicating the French government, the French army, the French puppet on the throne and every Mexican who believed in Frenchmen.

Maximilian's independence had angered Louis Napoleon also, and his forces were withdrawn. This was a deathblow to the empire. Affairs grew desperate. The emperor's fears of a revolt among his Mexican friends were excited in order to draw him completely to the Church party, who alone could save him. Every effort was made to turn the tide by awaking the old fear of annexation to the United States, now at peace.

What with the curses of the Church, the distrust and

divisions of his party and the fierce determination of the liberals to overthrow the empire and to build again the republic, Maximilian grew desperate. Unable to leave his post, he sent his wife, Carlotta, to plead with Louis Napoleon and the pope for aid; both were cold and obdurate. Carlotta's last hope was a personal appeal to the head of the Church, at the Vatican. But its doors were shut in her face. All night the young wife sat in anguished uncertainty in the waiting-room of His Holiness. The answer given her at last sent her out into the world a maniac. Weighed down with anxiety for Carlotta, Maximilian set out to go to her relief, but his sense of duty to his friends impelled him to remain and share their fate.

The French army having left Mexico, the emperor retreated to Queretaro; fearing to remain in the capital, he chose this city because of its adherence to the clerical party. Here he was entrenched in a fortress-like church surrounded by high walls enclosing beautiful gardens. Had it not been for the treachery of one of his own generals, he might have escaped to a place of greater safety; but he was betrayed to the liberal army under Juarez. He was condemned to death as an enemy of the country, on account of a cruel edict, promulgated by him two years before, outlawing all republicans. Every effort was made to save him by the consuls of the European governments, the United States joining in the general protest against this sacrifice of a comparatively innocent man. Carlotta was not there to plead for her husband's life, but the wife of Prince Salm-Salm, one of Maximilian's staff-officers, flung herself at the feet of the Indian president to plead for the life of her sovereign. Juarez wept as he put aside her clinging hands and



turned away. He did what he believed to be his duty to his country. Maximilian was shot to death, with his associates Miramon and Mexia, in June, 1867.

Up to this time, though religious liberty had been formulated as law, it never had been realized in practice. The Church party, deprived of the Inquisition and of the wealth which made them the landlords and the bankers of the nation, now found a stronghold in the superstitions of the people whom they had trained. When an avenue was to be lengthened in the capital, a large convent was found to be in the way. Congress ordered the building to be torn down, but the laborers employed, overawed by the priests, who threatened excommunication, refused to obey orders. Finding himself powerless to enforce the law, Juarez went to his old home in Oaxaca, drilled a regiment of Indians and came marching back with them to the capital, where they went to work with a will, unhindered by the populace. By such expedients as these, and in the face of many difficulties, Mexico at last was established on a republican basis.

Since the war of independence began, under Hidalgo, in 1810, ten changes had taken place in the form of government. More than fifty persons had been emperors, dictators and presidents. Repeatedly, two distinct governments had existed at the same time, at war each with the other. Secession of States was a chronic trouble; Texas and Yucatan were altogether lost. Both of the emperors were shot. There had been more than fifty revolutions and about three hundred *pronunciamientos*. The first great principle evolved from this chaos was that Mexico should be an independent nation; the second, that sovereign power should be vested in the people. The divisions in the great national party advo-

cating democracy are mostly to be traced to the machinations of the Church party in its struggles for power, now throwing its weight on one side of the scale and now on the other with the dominant idea of securing the control of the nation. In 1873-74 the liberal constitution framed in 1867 was so amended and improved as to be in several respects superior to its model, the Constitution of the United States. It is now the organic law of Mexico.

Juarez, the unswerving friend of republican institutions, died in office in 1872, after having been for fourteen years president of the republic. His pure character, his fidelity to trust and his lofty patriotism have given him the title of "the Washington of Mexico." In 1880, Manuel Gonzales, another Indian, was elected to the presidential chair, being the first man who has taken that seat without bloodshed.

Mexico is now a confederation of twenty-seven States, one Territory and a federal district. The legislative power is vested in a Congress composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate. All respectable male adults are voters, sending one member to Congress for every twenty thousand inhabitants; these members hold their places two years. The president holds office for four years, and cannot be re-elected without an interval of four years after his term has expired. The present executive is General Diaz, who took the chair December 1, 1884. "Except the immortal Juarez," says a missionary observer, "no man was ever more generally beloved and honored than General Diaz, a tall, dark, half-Indian hero." The members of his cabinet are nominal liberals, "but Romanists have taken fresh courage since his inauguration, and are openly clamor-

ing for an avenger of Maximilian to arise." There is much said of perfidy and abuse of power. The Protestants are daily accused of plotting to annex Mexico to the United States. The enemies of progress and reform are still found in the bosom of the Church of Rome. But with a free press, free schools and a free gospel Mexico cannot go back to the darkness of the past. She may fall for a time, but the prophecy of Abraham Lincoln for the United States will yet be realized for Mexico: "This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and a government of the people for the people and by the people which shall not perish from the earth."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### TO MEXICO BY RAIL.

THE first object which meets the voyager's eye as he approaches Mexico from the east by sea and nears the city of Vera Cruz is the white cone of snow-crowned Orizaba—"Mountain of the Star"—as it rises behind the city, the giant leader of a file of volcanoes crossing the continent in this latitude. Flat upon the beach before him lies the harborless town, the Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz—"Rich City of the True Cross"—of Cortez. Its white towers and walls and gayly-tinted roofs and domes, mingled with tufted and feathery palms, give to the picture an attractiveness not sustained upon a nearer view. The illusion is dispelled on entering the city, which is dreaded by strangers as the abode of miasms, the home of the deadly *vomito*. It is, however, regularly laid out, with streets crossing at right angles, and with houses two stories in height, built of coral-rock stuccoed. The buzzards perched lazily on every roof and every tower, and even on the golden crosses of the churches, seem sombre symbols of danger to the visitor. There is no true harbor here offering shelter in rough weather. From November to May the "northers" sweep the Gulf with resistless fury, often strewing the coast with wrecks. But these wild winds no sooner begin to rage than the city is cleared of the dreaded *vomito*, that scourge of these



hot lowlands; so that, next to the buzzards, which find business all the year round as the only scavengers, the northerners are the best friends of Vera Cruz.

Not far from the city, and separated from it by an arm of the sea, is the island-fortress of San Juan de Ulua. It is a picturesque old pile, said to have cost the Spanish government forty millions of dollars. This ex-



STREET IN VERA CRUZ.

travagance seems to have been quite a source of vexation to Charles V., its first owner. Standing one morning at a window of his palace in Spain about the time the architect's bills came in, he is said to have pointed his field-glass toward America, and, looking through it intently for a moment, to have exclaimed with grim humor, "Surely, a building which has cost so much should be seen above the horizon." This castle was the last foothold of Spain in Mexico, having held out against the revolutionists several years longer than any other place.

The first thought of every one who comes to Vera

Cruz is how to find the way out of it. Until 1806 the road from this city to the capital—a distance of over two hundred and sixty miles—was little better than a mule-path. The Mexican Railway, which now links the two cities, is one of the greatest marvels of engineering skill in the world. It was thirty-six years in building, and was opened on New Year's Day, 1873. Crossing the arid levels of the *tierra caliente* ("hot lands") bordering the Gulf, the road reaches a point about forty-five miles west of Vera Cruz, when it suddenly begins to climb the first terrace or the foothills of that great mountain-mass crowded into the taper-end of North America. The air grows cold and bracing and every breath is laden with the perfume of innumerable flowers. The roadside is lined with lofty palms. Morning-glories of luxuriant growth, with rainbow-tinted flowers, run riot among the trees, and orchids, or plants of the air, finding no room in the teeming soil beneath, take wings like strange bright birds and nestle on the crotches of the trees or cling to their branches.

The road lies through vast coffee-plantations as rich in fruit and flower and leaf as though they were in their own native Asia. Fields of corn overtop the low-roofed Indian huts, which, half hidden in the waving verdure, seem to be surrounded by some glittering phalanx of old-time warriors with tossing plumes and robes of green. Here perpetual summer reigns, and the fruits and the flowers of every zone flourish side by side. Four times each year the reaper may follow the sower and gather crops yielding from one hundredfold to four hundredfold. On the skirts of Orizaba there are majestic forests of mahogany, rosewood and other valuable trees. Here and there in some quiet valley or on the

shelves of the mountains are some of the finest estates in the world. One of these haciendas lies eleven thousand feet above the sea. Herds of cattle feed in the pastures far from any human habitation.

From many points the traveler looks down into some deep gorge of the Sierra Madré, the home of a laughing mountain-stream. He sees far below him, perhaps on a level with the sea, a bit of *tierra caliente* dropped into a seam of the rocky mass, rejoicing in the warmth and luxuriance of the perpetual spring which is possible in such shelter. From some cabin down there the Indians come toiling up laden with luscious fruits to sell at the nearest railroad station—oranges golden bright in a pretty home-made basket which goes with the fruit, great bunches of bananas, pineapples rich and melting, at three cents apiece, and other fruits which the sunny South has so entirely monopolized that they are unknown to us. The venders make a picture to remember—copper-colored faces, heavy, straight black hair and dark, melancholy eyes. The white cotton garments of the men and their big straw hats are fashions centuries old, but the bright-colored woolen blanket (*serape*) over the left shoulder and the long cigar are Spanish innovations. The women wear short calico dresses and a small scarf (called a *reboza*) of silk or cotton, fringed at the ends, wrapped about the head and the shoulders. This is the cradle of the inevitable baby or serves as a pouch for some other heavy load. As she goes to market the Indian woman shows the industry and the patience of her race by hands busied with her knitting or in picking the chickens she has brought to sell.

But we are off the track. The Mexican Railway passes through but few large towns. Orizaba, a sleepy

old place nestling picturesquely on the slope of the mountains, is a paradise for invalids, with its quaint houses, whose widespreading eaves almost elbow each other across the clean but narrow streets. Tlascala (Tlaxcalla) is left a little to the south as the train moves



INDIAN HUT IN THE TIERRA CALIENTE.

on and up. In one place a rise is made of four thousand feet in twenty-five miles. As the road climbs higher and higher one stratum of climate after another is passed, till the temperate region is left far below, and the cool breeze blowing in the car window seems to come from some latitude far to the north. The road, hewn out of the solid rock, seems to cling to the bare ribs of Mother Earth. Now it runs like a slender thread along the



face of a tremendous cliff, now doubles on itself till the locomotive can stare into the windows of the rear car, and now at a dizzy height it spans some abyss with a bridge which looks like a cobweb suspended in the air. After climbing about eight thousand feet into cloudland, the track begins to dip toward the great Valley of Mexico. The air is thin and pure, the mountains are bare and bleak, with trees of stunted growth and open levels of pasture-land from whose heights are seen still loftier summits crowned with eternal snow.

One of the finest views of Orizaba the peerless is seen from these high grounds. Dr. Haven thus describes it: "How superbly it lifts its shining cone into the shining heaven! Clouds had lingered about it on our way hither, touching now its top, now swinging around its sides, but here they are burned up, and only this pinnacle of ice shoots up fourteen thousand feet before your amazed uplifted eyes. Mont Blanc, at Chamouni, has no such solitariness of position, nor rounded perfection, nor rich surroundings. Everything conspires to give this the chief place among the mountains of the earth."

Passing on and down, the City of Mexico is reached at last, from the north. The general direction of the track is westward, but it enters the capital near the famous shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The train which started at midnight from Vera Cruz passed the mountains by daylight not only to give the passengers an opportunity to enjoy the scenery, but to avoid the car-wreckers and brigands who so infest the country that a guard of soldiers is necessary on every train, besides the armed and mounted police at each station on the road. The run from the coast to the capital is now made in twenty hours.

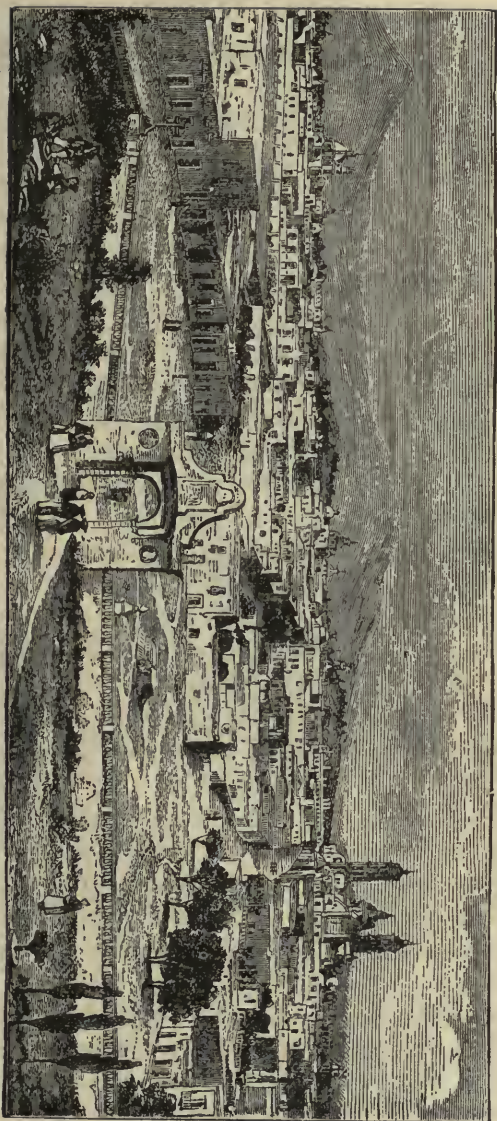


CITY OF MEXICO (DISTANT VIEW).

The City of Mexico is beautiful for situation from whatever point it is seen. It stands on the lowest level of the valley, about seven thousand feet above the sea, and forms a square like a great checker-board, nearly three miles in length each way. Being no longer on an island, the causeways have long since disappeared, and instead are *paseos*, or raised paved roads, planted on each side with double rows of trees and running far out into the country. The white rim of Lake Tezcuco is now nearly three miles beyond the city walls, but, though so shrunken and shallow, it still forms a beautiful object in the landscape, reflecting in its sparkling waters the snowy mountain-peaks of Popocatepetl and Iztacoihuatl as they tower seventeen miles away eastward from the capital.

The famous *chinampas*, or floating gardens, are seldom seen—at least, they have ceased to float; but there are multitudes of well-anchored islands dotting the lakes of Chalco and Xochimilco, in the environs of the city and lining its water-ways. The fruits, flowers and vegetables which grow on their rich soil vie with those which were brought to the city markets in Montezuma's day.

Frequently the owner's humble cabin is seen half buried in the luxuriant crops, which always grudge it room, while moored to the shore or afloat on the tide is the rude scow which carries the produce to market. Crowds of these boats find their way thither by the Grand Canal, running south-east from Tezcuco to Lake Chalco, a distance of about forty miles. The level of the latter is so much above that of the former that there is quite a swift current running toward the city, and the loaded boats have an easy time going to market; but coming back they are poled along by swarthy boatmen or women,



THE CITY OF MEXICO.

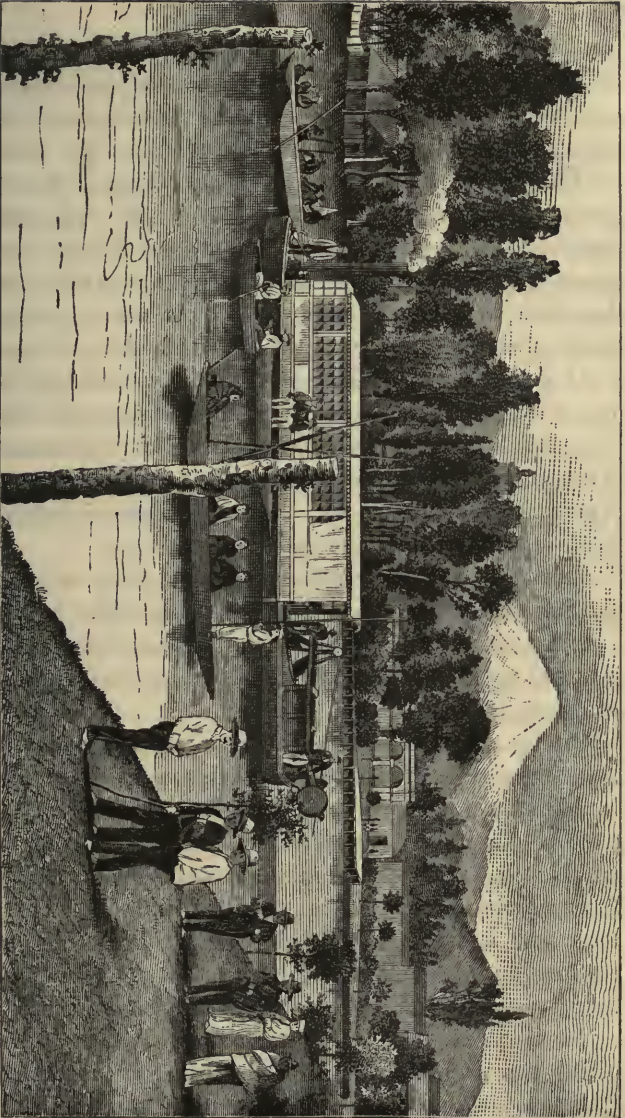


the depth in lake or in channel nowhere being over five feet.

The markets of Mexico are something wonderful, especially in the way of flowers. Huge bouquets of the choicest roses, pinks, geraniums, heliotrope, mignonette—the flowers of every zone, in fact—artistically arranged, sell for a trifle. Everybody buys and wears flowers. The pure smokeless air and the even temperature bring these exquisite flowers to full perfection in size, tint and color. There are fruits of all lands—apples, pears, cherries, plums, of the North, with figs, oranges, pomegranates, pineapples, bananas, of the South, with all the berries familiar to us, and some luscious productions of nature which can be known only by a visit to this highly-favored land. Everything is cheap and abundant. A double price is generally asked by the huckster, who expects to be beaten down and yields with Mexican politeness to the buyer's urgency.

The city is still partially supplied with water from the famous old spring at Chapultepec for which so many battles have been fought. Aztec supremacy began with its capture and ended after a desperate resistance when Cortez cut the aqueduct in 1520. Its health-giving streams are now flowing again. The *aquadors*, or water-carriers, throng to fill their earthen pots just as they did in the days of Cortez, and the bent figures with their loads strapped on their backs look as though they had just stepped out of the pictures on some old Egyptian monument.

There are no more beautiful objects in the city than the public fountains. One is built of hewn stone richly decorated with carvings and statuary and polished until it reflects the sunlight like some bright metal. The



TERMINUS OF LAKE CHALCO CANAL, MEXICO CITY.

water, cool and clear, flows in streams from every part of the marvelous structure, sparkling, dripping, splashing, until it seems like some gigantic water-nymph just emerging with plentitude of blessings from the waves.

The centre of the city is the Grand Plaza, a plot of ground about a thousand feet square with a beautiful little garden in the centre. There are pleasant seats among the tall old trees, statuary and fountains tossing their bright spray into the air. There is a music-stand about which the crowd gather in the evenings.

It is not yet a hundred years since the streets of this city were lighted at night, and scarcely twenty-five since a moonlight walk was safe for either ladies or gentlemen. They are as orderly now as those of any city in America. The policemen stand with lanterns, about a hundred yards apart, all over the city.

Leading away from the western side of the Plaza is the San Cosme avenue, along which Cortez and his discomfited army fled through the darkness and the rain of that sad night in 1520. The palace he built is still owned by his descendants.

On the way to the Paseo Nuevo is the Alameda, a beautiful forest-park of ten or twelve acres surrounded by high stone walls and a moat. It is the chief promenade of the city. Well-kept walks and carriage-roads wind about under the grand old beeches, and a massive fountain plays in the centre. Here the birds have built their nests and reared their young undisturbed for generations, and the place is vocal with twitter and song and merry shouts of children.

There are sad memories haunting almost every corner of Mexico, and this beautiful Alameda is no exception. Long ago, when Rome was mistress here, the fires of the

Inquisition blazed in this spot, and here, in the sight of assembled thousands who came as for a summer holiday, fifty victims were burned in a grand *auto da fé*. In the square on which stands the convent of San Domingo were the Inquisition buildings, under the care of Dominican friars; this is now occupied by the Methodist mission. In this square not long ago was an iron post, known as "the burning-post," where heretics were dealt with by the Holy Office. The latest public execution was in 1815, when General José Morelos was put to death here. The old Jesuit church in this square is now used as a custom-house.

One hundred years ago Mexico was a city of monasteries and churches. Full one-half the space enclosed within its walls was covered with these various buildings, some of them occupying from five to twenty acres of ground. They were magnificent structures, the abodes of luxury and ease. As the Church increased in wealth and influence the monasteries and the convents are said to have been hotbeds of vice and sedition. When Comonfort was in power, it was found that many of these buildings were interfering with public improvement, and he began the work of demolition by ordering a street to be cut through the convent of San Francisco, one of the most elegant in the city. In a part of the monastery thus divided we find another Protestant church worshipping. Some of the exquisitely-polished stones of this edifice are said to have been preserved from the wreck of Montezuma's house, and many of the pillars are known to have been the work of Aztec hands. This vast monastery was one of the finest buildings of its kind in America. It was more honored than any other, as the place where the body of Cortez lay in state.



The grandest church-building on this continent is the cathedral, facing the Plaza. Its white towers, two hundred feet high, overtop every building in the city. Its mere shell cost two millions of dollars, and that, too, in a land and an age when labor was very cheap. Scarcely a church interior in the world can surpass this in rich and costly decoration. The wealth of "the golden realm of Mexico" was poured out here without stint. Heavy marbles carved by the best masters of Europe were brought over the sea and carried by surefooted mules over the dizzy heights of the sierras. The elaborately-carved choir was made in Mexico, and is estimated to be worth a million of dollars. This edifice was begun in 1573, by order of Philip II., and finished in about a hundred years. It is of the Doric order, with three entrance-doors on the principal façade, flanked by two square open towers and crowned with a dome of fine proportions. At the base of one of these towers is the celebrated Aztec calendar, an enormous granite monolith, which was removed in 1790 from the place in the Plaza where it had been buried by the orders of Cortez.

The cathedral occupies the site of the great Aztec temple,\* and is five hundred feet long by four hundred and twenty wide. "The first object that presents itself to one entering it is the altar, erected on a platform in the centre of the building; it is made of highly-wrought and highly-polished silver and covered with a profusion of crosses and ornaments of pure gold. On each side of this altar runs a balustrade, enclosing a space about eight feet wide and eighty or a hundred feet long. The balusters are about four feet high and four inches thick in

\* In 1881 the outlying corner-stones of this old building were discovered by workmen digging in the neighborhood.

the largest part; the hand-rail, from six to eight inches wide. Upon the top of this hand-rail, at the distance of six or eight feet apart, are images, beautifully wrought and about two feet high, used as candelabras. All of these—the balustrade, the hand-rail and the images—are made of a compound of gold, silver and copper, more valuable than silver. It is said that an offer was once refused to take this balustrade and replace it with another of exactly the same size and workmanship, of pure silver, and to give half a million of dollars besides. As you walk through the building, on either side there are different apartments filled from floor to ceiling with paintings, statues, vases, huge candlesticks, waiters and a thousand other articles of gold and silver.”\* The jeweled vestments of the Virgin enshrined in this magnificent building are said to have cost three millions of dollars, while the garments of the priests who minister to her on state occasions are proportionate in worth, and so heavy that the wearers can scarcely stand under their weight when pronouncing the benediction. The cathedral was but one of seventy or eighty churches in the City of Mexico whose wealth and splendor made them remarkable in an age when the Church claimed a monopoly of the treasures of the world.

When Cortez was demolishing old Tenochtitlan, as the city was then called, it was found to be impossible to break up some of the heathen monuments with which it abounded, and he therefore ordered them to be buried in the great square. Besides the calendar stones, the old stone of sacrifice, with a heavy yoke once used in holding fast the victim, was dug up in 1790, also a huge stone image of Humming-Bird, with some of the carved

\* *Mexico and the United States*, by G. D. Abbott, LL.D.

capitals of the massive pillars of his temple. These relics are now on exhibition in the National Museum with many other relics of that day, such as Montezuma's feather-shield and cloak and the silken banner once borne before his conqueror. The Mexican government has forbidden the exportation of the relics with which the



MERCHANTS' BAZAAR, MEXICO.

land abounds, but antiquarians can still easily reap a rich harvest on this historic ground.

The houses of Mexico are seldom more than two stories high. They are built about a *patio*—an interior open square surrounded by verandas. The entrance from the street is into this court, from which the upper stories are reached. The style of architecture is Moor-

ish, and each block presents a solid front, with windows and one door opening into each separate dwelling. The soil is very spongy, and, what with floods and earthquakes, many of the foundations have sunken; so that



SELLER OF BIRD-CAGES, MEXICO.

church-towers lean and doorways may be a foot below the pavement. During the heavy rains of September, Lake Tezcuco is apt to overflow and the city to be flooded. Indeed, the sidewalks are always damp upon the shady side. The lower story of the houses being damp and dark, it is the custom to leave it to the ser-



vants, while the family are domiciled in the second floor, and in fine weather betake themselves to the roof.

All the substantial buildings in Mexico are bright with color. Those which are not white stucco are tinted in gray, buff or pale green enlivened with various shades of red. Some of the churches could be called pink. With blocks built with one solid front, it is quite a relief to the eye to see a gray house adjoining one faced with blue encaustic tiles or pale green. Massive carvings and decorations in mosaic-work, balconies and latticed windows are also quite effective and do much to vary the otherwise sombre architecture.

The houses in the suburbs are gay with flowering vines, and almost any open doorway in the city will give a glimpse of the *patio*, or courtyard, with its cool verandas and bright flowers and shrubbery around a plashing fountain.

Among the improvements projected by Maximilian was the rebuilding of Mexico on a more healthful site. The city is still growing westward, according to his wise plan, and the high grounds in the suburbs have quite a modern appearance. Thousands of new houses are going up and old ones have been remodeled, while real estate has almost doubled its value since the life-blood from the world's great centres began to pulsate through the railroads—those great continental arteries.

The lumbering diligence will soon disappear from city and country, with the picturesque brigand, and the multitude of beggars who from time immemorial have infested the capital will vanish in that happy day when Yankee ploughs and Protestant Sunday-schools shall be domesticated throughout the land. These paupers have already been set to work on railroads and other public

improvements, and a house of correction for young delinquents is helpful in reclaiming some of the less hardened villains.

From statements recently published we learn that "primary education has been declared compulsory, but the law is not enforced. In 1884 there were in Mexico 8986 public elementary schools, with nearly 500,000 pupils, and 138 for superior and professional education, with an attendance of 17,200. The government spent on education in 1884 more than \$3,000,000." Thus we



MEXICAN MARKET-WOMAN.

see that education has made slow but steady progress since the separation of Church and State, in 1857. At that time the University of Mexico—entirely a Church institution—was abolished by the republicans, and a number of special schools took its place for law, medicine, art, science, agriculture, mines, military and civil engineering, etc. In these institutions nearly four thousand students are now pursuing their studies. Besides these are asylums for the blind, the deaf and dumb, and

other charities which are supported by private individuals. With all these opportunities, however, it is still true that six-sevenths of the people of Mexico can neither read nor write. The business enterprise of the country is in the hands of a very few, and those mostly foreigners. The higher classes are not inferior in intelligence and culture to cultivated people in the most favored lands. The Mexican is fluent in conversation and urbane in manner, but the wide gap between the



A MEXICAN SEÑORA.

aristocracy and the lower orders reveals Mexico's great need of a middle class prepared by education for those blessings of constitutional liberty which the masses are yet trampling under their feet for very ignorance.

Most of the two hundred and thirty thousand residents of the capital are Indians. The kneeling crowd in the churches on some saint's day is largely aboriginal in its make-up, and as democratic as in ancient days.

The dark-eyed señora of Spanish blood wrapped in the ample folds of her silken *reboza* bows on the stone floor close beside an Indian from the country on the way to market with a hen-coop on his back, and the cackling, crowing inmates of the coop in no wise disturb the prayers of either devotee. Perhaps half the crowd remembered to throw a kiss to their old deity, the sun, as they entered the shrine where the one true God is professedly worshipped. There is no Sabbath in Mexico. The sanctity of the Lord's day has been given to seasons devoted to the adoration of his disciples, and there are so many more of these saints' days than of Sabbaths in the year that if they had no other reason to obey man rather than God this would be sufficient for this pleasure-loving people. Formerly they went in the morning to mass, and then in the afternoon to a bull-fight—an institution that might seem to have come down from the bloodthirsty Aztecs did we not know that it was brought from Spain. Mexico has done better than the mother-country, for these disgusting exhibitions have been suppressed by the government.

Mexico is the paradise of equestrians; even the beggars formerly went on horseback.

The Paseo de la Riforma is a fine avenue three miles long, leading out to the famous castle of Chapultepec, beside the Chalco Canal. A ride in one of the pleasure-boats on the latter is a favorite pastime. These boats are fitted up with cushioned seats in the middle, protected by an awning, for passengers, while the boatmen use their long poles at either end. On land the way is thronged from seven to nine o'clock in the morning and from six to seven in the evening with equestrians and gay carriages filled with ladies. The magnificent hous-



ings of the steeds, rich with trappings of gold and silver and silken embroidery, form one of the finest sights of the metropolis, to be surpassed in splendor only by the dress of their riders. The amount of flashing buttons and gold-lace a Mexican gallant can wear is to be measured only by the size of his person. His wide *sombrero*, feathered and laced, his spurs and other martial accoutrements, make him a fine object of observation in the row of horsemen who stand together to be gazed at by every passer-by.

The nineteenth century makes itself manifest on some of the roads leading out of the city in the shape of "horse-cars"—which are crowded most of the time—drawn by mules. There are two classes of these cars, with the names on the outside. The conductors blow a horn at the crossings or to hold up.

The present castle of Chapultepec was built in 1785 by the viceroy Galvez on the site of one of the old summer-houses of the luxurious chiefs of Mexico, the foundations of which still remain, and also one of the bathing-pools cut in solid rock. It is approached by an avenue of gigantic cypress trees. The city is in full view from the windows, with its domes and towers, its softly-tinted houses interspersed with forest trees. The great valley with its embracing mountains, whose tall sentinel-peaks rise far to the east, are all reflected in the mirror-lakes below from the very base to the summit. Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl are giant gate-posts in the granite wall which surrounds this great plateau. Seen through the wonderfully pure and rarefied atmosphere of this high table-land, these summits seem closer than they really are, being thirty miles apart. Between them Cortez made his way, and centuries later General Scott followed.

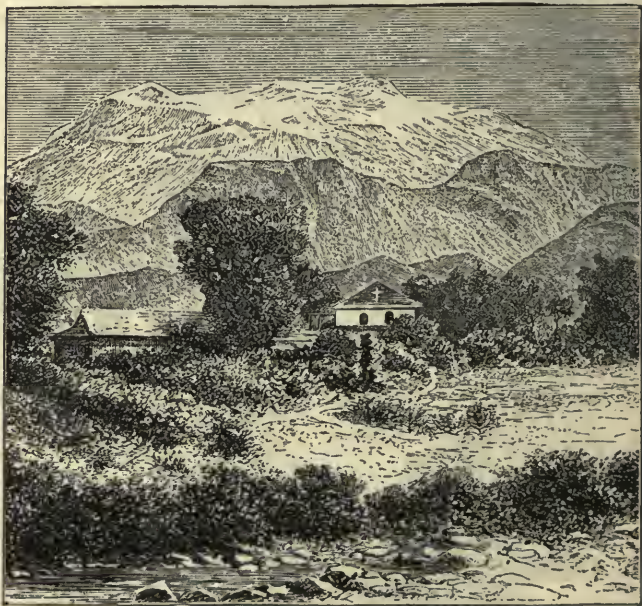
Popocatepetl, five thousand feet higher than Mont Blanc, is a perfect cone. Now and then a smoke-wreath



CHAPULTEPEC CASTLE.

tells of the fires which rage far below its rocky foundations, but there has been no eruption within three hundred years. Such was the dread of this smoking mountain that no Mexican ever scaled it until the Spaniards came. Since these adventurous spirits seized Mexico,

Popocatepetl has been turned into a vast sulphur-quarry. A jet of vapor of twenty horse-power rises about eight hundred feet below the edge of the crater, and it is proposed to use this natural force to hoist the sulphur to the top of this vast cavity, instead of employing men to climb up in that rarefied atmosphere with heavy loads.



SUMMIT OF IZTACCIHUATL, MEXICO.

Over against Popocatepetl is Iztaccihuatl—the “Woman in White.” Its resemblance to a human figure is perceived more readily than that of the Man in the Moon. One needs a strong imagination in both cases. The giantess lies in her snowy robes, with her feet toward her husband and her cold face upturned, her hair being simulated by one of the dark forests which

mantle the lower slopes of these mountains. Recent enterprise has found a way of making money out of both these old people. Since Popocatapetl produces sulphur, his wife has been called upon for ice, of which she has enough and to spare. The city of Puebla is supplied in this way, and a few years more may see its white mantle dealt out by piecemeal to cool other heated communities farther away.

The Virgin Mary is the tutelar deity of all Mexico; more than two-thirds of the people worship her in the form of an Indian maiden. About ten years after the surrender of Guatemozin, and while the people were still maintaining, though under great difficulties, their old tribal relations, it became evident that the religion which they had been forced to adopt was growing more and more hateful to them, and that unless something was done to win their hearts even the compromise with heathenism which passed under the name of Christianity would be shaken off altogether: Christians had made the name of Christ so odious that his beloved message lost all its power.

In the suburbs of the city was a place whither the Aztecs once resorted to pour their sorrows into the ear of their ancient idol Tomantzin—a sweet word in their ears. The last syllable is a title given to persons of high rank, but the first part of the name has a meaning which is dear to every human heart. It is “Our Mother.” Tomantzin attracted the attention of the dignitaries of the Church as they studied the Indian question of that day, and soon she was formally adopted by the conquerors, and with some changes in dress and the development of her history to suit the times she took her place in the Church as the queen of heaven.



Tomantzín was introduced in her new character to her old friends with an ingenuity admirable if not commendable. One December night in 1531 a converted Indian—Juan Diego by name—was praying alone on the hill of Guadalupe, about two miles from the city gate, where the people had always worshiped Tomantzín. As he knelt under the starlit sky the Virgin Mary appeared to him robed in white, a great light shining about her. Yet, wonder of wonders! she was no longer white, but appeared as an Indian woman and spoke of his people as her own people and in their mother-tongue.

“Go,” she said, “to the bishop of Mexico and tell him it is my wish that a church should be built for me on this spot.”

When Diego recovered from his surprise, he hastened to the bishop’s palace with his strange news. It was received with suitable incredulity and passed by. But Diego went back to the spot hallowed by the beautiful vision, and, to his great joy, the Virgin appeared again, repeating her commands to the bishop, and adding that the Church would never prosper in Mexico until her message was obeyed. To give weight to her words, a fountain burst forth from the spot where she stood. Again Juan Diego went to the bishop, who still doubted. He wanted some sign to prove that the story was true. When the Indian again visited the hill, he saw the Virgin near the spring, but this time she bade him take to the faithless bishop a quantity of full-blown roses as a proof of her creative power. The barren rock now burst forth in bloom, though it was the Mexican winter, when roses did not flourish in those cold uplands. With the miraculous roses in his blanket the Indian hastened back to the bishop, when, lo! as he opened his treasure,

he saw imprinted on the coarse woolen fabric the face that had thrice appeared to him on the hill. This was accepted as convincing proof that the Virgin had espoused the cause of the Indians. Belief in Our Lady of Guadalupe now became universal among her countrymen, although the fraud of the whole story is frankly acknowledged by many intelligent and loyal Roman Catholics in Mexico.

On the spot was built a church which became the richest in this land of rich churches. Its great wealth is not derived from the mines, but from the earnings of the abject poor, in whose behalf the Indian Virgin came. Half the women in Mexico, and thousands of the men, are named after this lady, and scarcely a house in the land lacks her blanket-image enshrined in the most honored place. Hundreds of chapels have been erected in her honor in every city and town in Mexico.

The anniversary of the Virgin's appearance is still celebrated by a great pilgrimage to her shrine. Along the road from the capital to this spot were constructed fourteen beautiful shrines, each commemorating some fact in the history of Christ. Thousands of devotees can be seen crawling on their bare knees on the hard pavement, saying their prayers as they go painfully along. The highest dignitaries in the land were wont to join in this celebration. As many as one hundred thousand people came on foot from the surrounding country to join in the ceremonies and to bring their offerings. Those who were too poor to pay for lodgings would sleep on the sacred soil, and thousands thus camped out rolled in their blankets, acres of sleeping humanity. This pilgrimage is falling into disuse. The great neglect the occasion, and the poor have less time to spend thus

than in ante-railroad times. In fact, the Mexican Railway has usurped the road over which bare-kneed pilgrims traveled, and the shrines are falling into decay since, with Maximilian and Carlotta, clerical rule passed away.

There has always been a great rivalry between the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Virgin brought over from Spain, Nostra Señora de los Remedios. The latter is an ugly wooden doll about a foot long. It is said to have once belonged to Cortez, and to have been set up by him in the old heathen temple of Mexico. Some of the Spaniards rescued the image at the time of their conflict with the Aztecs, and it was taken away with other valuables and lost in the wreck of the *noche triste*. When, some time afterward, it was found in the heart of a huge maguey-plant on the top of a bare hill, it was claimed that the Virgin had saved her image by a miracle, and henceforth she was shrined in a golden maguey-flower and worshiped as divine. Many a time the wooden Virgin, seated in a gilded coach and drawn by a nobleman of the highest rank, has been carried through the streets of the capital, while the viceroy humbly walked behind.

The political opinions of these rival Virgins are supposed to be very marked. The republicans were shrewd enough to win the Lady of Guadalupe to their side at the beginning of the contest, while the Lady de los Remedios was counted upon as a true Spaniard in her sympathies. Each of them had a general's dress and marched with her party when they paraded the streets.

At one time, when the conservatives were despairing of their cause, they began to threaten the Lady de los Remedios for her indifference to their entreaties. They told her that if she would hear their prayers she might keep her situation in the cathedral and wear her jeweled

petticoats in peace; if she still continued deaf to their prayers, they would put her in plain clothes and ship her to Spain. At last ruin stared them in the face. The wooden doll was taken down, and bearded men, like children in a pet with their toy, bought a passport for her to her native land. She was actually on her way there in disgrace when the authorities came to their senses and ordered the disgraced image to be returned to the church.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *THE LAND: ITS PRODUCTS AND CITIES.*

**A**FTER more than half its territory had been taken by its grasping neighbor the United States, Mexico still was about four times the size of France, with a coast-line of fifty-eight hundred miles and a common boundary with the United States of eighteen hundred miles.

Exclude the Rio Grande, which divides the two nations for nearly half this distance, and Mexico may be called a riverless country. The magnificent harbors which open along its western coast are just beginning to be known, though several of them are among the finest in the world. Guaymas, a village at the mouth of a small river emptying into the Gulf of California, is now the terminus of a railroad which gives direct communication with St. Louis, Philadelphia, New York and all our great cities. An active trade is springing up which will soon bring the place into competition with some of its better-known neighbors. From San Blas, farther south, on the Pacific coast, a road runs eastward to Tampico, on the Gulf of Mexico. Acapulco, another railroad terminus, has a noble land-locked harbor, and is likely to be one of the queen-cities of the South-west. It is probable that Mexico, so long closed to a free commerce, will first be opened on the north, on its landward side, and that its

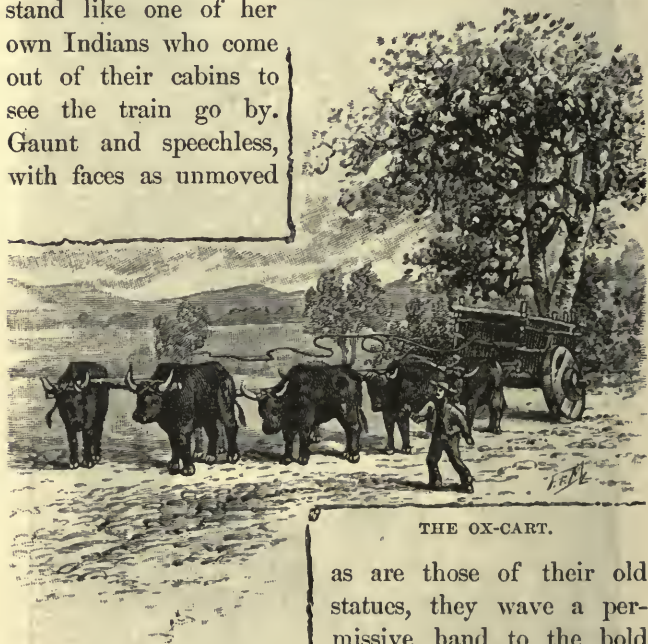
lack of water-communication will be more than made up by several great railroad systems converging toward



ON THE CANAL, NEAR MEXICO CITY.

the ancient capital and linking the sleepy old cities along their routes with the wide-awake world outside.

Habits and customs which are wrought into the very life of the people are fast giving way before American ideas. In spite of the national bugbear of annexation, Mexico is to-day in a receptive mood. She seems to stand like one of her own Indians who come out of their cabins to see the train go by. Gaunt and speechless, with faces as unmoved



THE OX-CART.

as are those of their old statues, they wave a permissive hand to the bold intruder as they stand gazing at this wonder of our rushing age. If old Popocatepetl, the home of the gods, is safely tunneled for a new track, and the holy hill of Cholula is cut away to make room for the inevitable locomotive, innovations like American looms and ploughs and reapers will surely be tolerated in old Mexico, and the modern express-wagon will be permitted to take the place of the primitive ox-cart.

There are immense districts, however, where such foreign wares are still unknown. One has only to find one of these out-of-the-way places to see husbandry carried on as it was when Joseph was Pharaoh's overseer in Egypt. If by chance an American plough makes its way there, it is apt to be broken up for its iron, since that can be turned into cash, while the farmer plods contentedly on in the rut his ancestors made five hundred years ago. But the lower classes in town and in city have been aroused to new life. Those who used to beg or to steal because they had nothing else to do can now earn an honest living with pickaxe and spade along the route of some of the new railroads. There has been a very perceptible change not only in arrests for crime, but in that turbulent spirit which found vent in endless revolutions. It was estimated that in 1883 more than fifty thousand Mexicans were at work digging, felling trees, building bridges and cutting roads through forests and over mountains. Many of these had never before done a full day's work. At least six railroads are now heading toward as many cities on the Pacific shore of Mexico, while the country is crossed by half that number of transcontinental roads.

There are but two seasons in Mexico—the wet season and the dry season. The mean temperature in January is 52.5° Fahrenheit; in July, 65.3°. From October to May there is but little rain. As the heavy floods of autumn are left behind the streams then swollen by freshets dry up, the meadows look parched, the shrubs wither and on the high plateau clouds of dust fill the air. In some parts of the country water becomes scarce, even for culinary purposes, and the precious fluid may be seen traveling in barrels behind the donkey and



its master from some stream to the home. In May there are frequent showers, and by September tiny rivulets become raging torrents leaping from shelf to shelf of their rocky beds through some great crevice in the mountains.

On the Pacific coast the steep sides of the cordilleras are cleft by long valleys running east and west and open-



WATER-PEDDLER, MEXICO.

ing out directly on the sea. The surf often thunders up to the very mouth of the deep mountain-glen till the green of its perpetual spring is moistened by the spray.

A large part of Mexico has been denuded of its forests. The Spaniards neglected the system of irrigation used by the more provident natives, and many parts of the country once profitably cultivated are now lying

waste. The great naked mountains and the leafless character of much of the vegetation give to some portions of Mexico a sterile appearance which always makes an impression on strangers. Some varieties of prickly pear grow to the size of quite large trees. The fluted columns of the organ-cactus tower up to the height of sixty feet in favorable soil. The prickly-pear cactus is



GATHERING THE JUICE OF THE MAGUEY FOR PULQUE.

used for hedges, and, as it bristles with thorns and spines, intruders are kept at a respectful distance. The Indians, who are very fond of the fruit of this cactus, go out in August, when it is ripe, and hook it down with forked sticks. Mexico seems to be the home of the cacti. Their grotesque forms are seen everywhere, brightened in their season with beautiful blossoms—pink, pale-yellow, warm tints of red or deep gold.

One of the most common plants is the maguey (*Agave Americana*). This grows wild everywhere and is useful to its last particle. It furnishes thread, needles, cord, ropes, thatch and paper, and also bears a palatable fruit when its blossoms are allowed to come to perfection. Its chief commercial value is in its sap, out of which pulque, the national beverage, is made. The agave matures very slowly, needing about ten years of growth to become productive. The Indians who have watched it know to a day when the blossom will be ready for the knife. The whole heart of the plant is then cut out, leaving nothing but the stiff outside circle of leaves. Into the deep cavity thus left oozes the sap, which is carefully dipped out two or three times each day. The basin of the wounded plant will hold a pailful of the sweet honey-water. When this ferments, as it does in twenty-four hours, it becomes pulque (pronounced *pool-kay*). The sap from one plant will often run in this way for three months. The plant then dies, and others spring up from its roots, to run the same course.

Pulque is produced in large quantities about Puebla and the capital. When ready for use, this beverage has a taste which is a cross between sour milk and slightly-tainted beef; it is seldom palatable on first acquaintance, but a relish for it is soon acquired, and drunkenness from its excessive use is common. The Indians are its natural victims. Humboldt says that in his day "the police in Mexico sent around tumbrels to collect the drunkards to be found stretched out in the streets. These Indians are carried to the principal guard-house. In the morning an iron ring is put on their ankles, and they are made to sweep the streets for three days."

Mexico has well been called an "agricultural cosmos;"

there is not a plant of any zone or of any soil which cannot flourish within its borders. All European cereals are at home on the table-lands, with the fruits and the forest-trees of other temperate regions. In the forests below one hundred and fourteen varieties of timber suitable for cabinet-work have been counted, with seventeen kinds of oil-bearing plants and several valuable species of gum



SHOP FOR THE SALE OF PULQUE.

trees, of which the india-rubber variety is a specimen. Sugar is a staple crop, and coffee, introduced during this century, is very productive. The government has recently ordered two millions of fast-growing trees to be planted within four years. Among these is the eucalyptus, which flourishes well in the lake-regions of Mexico.

The people are mostly vegetarians; maize and beans,



with pepper, form their main diet. The banana has been a wonderful boon to the poor of this country; four thousand pounds of bananas may be gathered from ground which yields thirty pounds of wheat. Within a year after the suckers are set out the plant is in full bearing, which means three crops in a year.

Nothing in Mexico has so fastened upon the world's attention as have its wonderful mines; between A. D. 1519 and A. D. 1826 precious metals to the value of \$2,588,732,000 had been taken from them. Silver and gold were exported by the ton. At the close of the eighteenth century the famous old *vita madre*, or mother-vein, of Guanajuato had yielded one-fifth of all the silver then in circulation in the world. Most of this treasure found its way to Spain, but vast quantities of it were hoarded up in the churches built everywhere in Mexico. Candlesticks of gold too heavy for one man to lift, pyxes, crosses, statues, of precious metals encrusted with gems and most elaborately wrought, adorn the shrines, whose wealth of ornamentation exceeds anything known elsewhere. When the mines of St. Eulalia, near Chihuahua, were in full operation years ago, there was a tax of twelve and a half cents on every eight ounces of silver drawn from the mines, and in fifty years the proceeds had reared one of the grandest churches in Mexico.

Many of the richest mines in the country—those of St. Eulalia among the number—have been closed for generations. In the eager search for “bonanzas” the owners passed by a great deal of valuable ore rather than work for it. The government has recently issued a permit to an enterprising Yankee to reopen this old mine. He has erected a mill in Chihuahua fitted up with mod-

ern machinery, and after tunneling the mountain in two directions has turned out from fifteen to twenty-five thousands of dollars in silver bullion in a month, with a prospect of doing better when the capacity of his works is increased. Other metals seem to be waiting for energetic miners. Quantities of tin are found in Michoacan and Jalisco, and a ton of this metal was recently brought to the United States from Durango. In the same neighborhood is the famous mountain of magnetic-iron ore—a treasure of which the Aztecs never knew the use, and which the Spaniards were too much occupied with gold-hunting to consider.

Old Mexican mines have entered on a fresh lease of productiveness of late years, and new ones will soon be opened. Already the miner's toil is lightened by modern helps, and men are not used as beasts of burdens. Time was when all these tons of ore were carried up in baskets slung on men's backs and supported by a band across the forehead. The amount of labor required may be imagined when it is said that one of these old shafts pierced the earth's crust to a depth of sixteen hundred feet, and that it annually yielded five hundred tons of silver and one and a half tons of gold.

Except when drunk, the Mexican Indians are taciturn and patient under their burdens, though taught by ages of oppression to be distrustful. They seem to be contented with their lot, though it must be said that as a people they have in them great possibilities of obstinacy. They are slow workers, but faithful and persevering. They look like a conquered people. Their faces are as sad, their hearts as dark and their minds as ignorant as when the sun went down on their tribes three hundred years ago. Their humility is often most touching. The

whites have given them the title of *gentes sin razon*—"men without reason"—and they accept the reproachful term as readily as it is given.

The Indians never deserve so well to be called "men without reason" as when they give themselves up to the celebration of some feast-day of the Church. The extravagance of a poor man on such occasions, especially when he frequents the *pulqueria*, or dram-shop, is marvelous. Money is borrowed in advance, to be returned in labor; debt thus becomes the bane of the Mexican peasantry. The debtors (*mozos*) make up a large part of the population, and a more hopeless slavery it is not possible to imagine. Another great source of this and other evils is the extravagant marriage-fee demanded by the priests. This is never less than fourteen dollars; and if this ceremony is not altogether dispensed with—as it is in a majority of cases—a young man begins his career as a *mozo* by borrowing money to defray the expenses of his wedding.

In love of wife and children Mexicans of every class are not excelled anywhere. If Diego or Juan is at work on one of the new roads, thither he transports his wife and his babies. He has a shelter for them somewhere among the cactus or mesquite and stunted palms, or he burrows in a hillside or has a little thatch amid the brush, where, though not very comfortable according to our ideas, he has a home. Here the little brown children roll in the sun with the pigs, who have accompanied the family in their migration. The pony, if they have one, is tethered close by, and the inevitable *burro*, or donkey, goes hobbling about, as long-suffering as the Indian and with something like his history.

The ordinary homes of the common people are gen-

erally built of adobe, or, if near a forest, of pine-slabs leaning against a framework of logs or supported by a tree. The roof is a thatch of cornstalks or branches of trees or the stiff, sword-like leaves of the agave. Very



NATIVE INDIAN ABODE.

few of these hovels have doors, and none of them have windows. A heap of stones in the corner or a great flat slab in the centre serves for a fireplace on the earthen floor, and the smoke easily finds its way out through the cracks. Corn is ground between two stones, after the simple ancestral fashion. *Tortillas*—cakes made of crushed corn and water, baked hard—and rich brown beans, called *frijols*, hot with pepper, form the staple food. A few unglazed pots and dishes, a rude pitcher or two for water, gourds for cups, a *tortilla*-trough and kneading-stone, handed down perhaps for generations, with mats for seats and bedding, form all the furniture of the hovels in which most of the people live. The making and the eating of tortillas, however, are not confined to the poor. These are points on which all Mexicans are united. Twenty-five years ago chairs and tables



were so little used in Mexico by the poorer people as to be more ornamental than useful; they preferred to sit on their heels or to lounge on the floor. Very few had knives or forks, and a spoon was always made of a *tor-tilla* folded together and dipped in the family-dish. The food and the clothing in such a home are generally home-



MAKING TORTILLAS, MEXICO.

made. The women are industrious, and manage to weave with their old Aztec looms such cloth as their ancestors gave to Cortez by the bale. The apparatus looks like a few sticks tied together, and when not in use hangs on the wall.

While some of the Indians of Mexico have pushed their way up to positions of influence, and sometimes of wealth, they are generally very poor, herding together in the cities in a quarter of their own, a people within a people. They number about five millions—more than half the entire population—while Indian blood predominates in the *mestizo*, or mixed, race of the country, the Creoles, or Europeans and their descendants, forming not



MEXICAN WATER-WORKS.

more than one-tenth of the inhabitants of Mexico. The Toluca Valley, about forty miles west of the capital, is owned by Indian pueblos, or corporations. Near Cuernavaca, where Cortez fought a fierce battle with the na-

tives, is a village which has successfully resisted Spanish influences and maintained its old institutions to this day. Nor is this a solitary instance. The Indians are not dying out nor losing their tribal identity; they are a hardy race, and still thrive under treatment which blotted out the islanders among whom the Spaniards first settled. They often live to be a hundred years old; the women are especially long-lived. Few of either sex are deformed.

The whole race of village Indians, Aztecs and others, are an industrious people. Men and women share in the burdens of caring for the family; a woman may work in the fields, but the heavier part of out-door labor comes on the men. They all seem to be natural burden-bearers. Those of them who are too poor to own one of their little unshod ponies, or even a "burro," will all day carry on their own backs a load of from seventy-five to a hundred pounds. They take short steps and go on their long journeys up and down hill in a jog-trot, returning satisfied if they have earned a dollar or two at most. Their peculiar tenacity of purpose is shown by the fact that they are apt to go to the very place they set out for, even though they could make as much money by selling before they reached there. A missionary tells of a poor fellow who brought a hundred pounds of charcoal to market. He had spent a week altogether cutting and burning it, carried it twenty-five miles on his back and sold it for seventy-five cents. Some of these laborers earn from twelve and a half to thirty cents a day; others, loaded with debt, work for a bare subsistence and scarcely see money from one year's end to another.

Mexico has never been a densely-populated country. On an all-day journey by rail through the State of Chihuahua the vast, grassy plain over which the road

passes, bounded on either side by fantastic mountain-peaks, has scarcely a sign of human habitation except the station-buildings along the track. Immense herds of cattle and numerous flocks of sheep are seen quietly feeding around some lake, as though they had been taking care of themselves for generations. This is not the case, however, for somewhere, hidden in a clump of trees or on a sightly hill, the comfortable mansion of some lordly proprietor (*haciendado*) arises surrounded by fields and orchards and a village of his peon herdsmen. Perhaps all the land which has been in sight for a whole day has been the property of one family for a century or more. Slavery was abolished when Mexican independence was secured, but the evil effects of the *hacienda* system—as this one-man power is called—remained.

Up to this time the towns and the hamlets of Mexico look very much as they have looked for the past three hundred years—bits of old Spain dropped into the New-World soil amid the mouldering ruins of its ancient civilization. Forty miles north of the capital the Mexican Central Railroad passes Tula, one of the Toltec cities which was ruined before Cortez came. Here, among the fields near the famous pyramids of the sun and moon, thousands of little images are found by following the ploughman as he turns over the sod; they are supposed to be votive offerings once brought to this old Toltec shrine. No two faces are alike, but the sad expression worn now by the Indians is characteristic of these clay heads. Arrows, pottery and other remains show that this plain was in bygone ages the home of a large population.

Most of the interesting cities of Mexico are, or soon will be, reached by railroads. Monterey, one of the

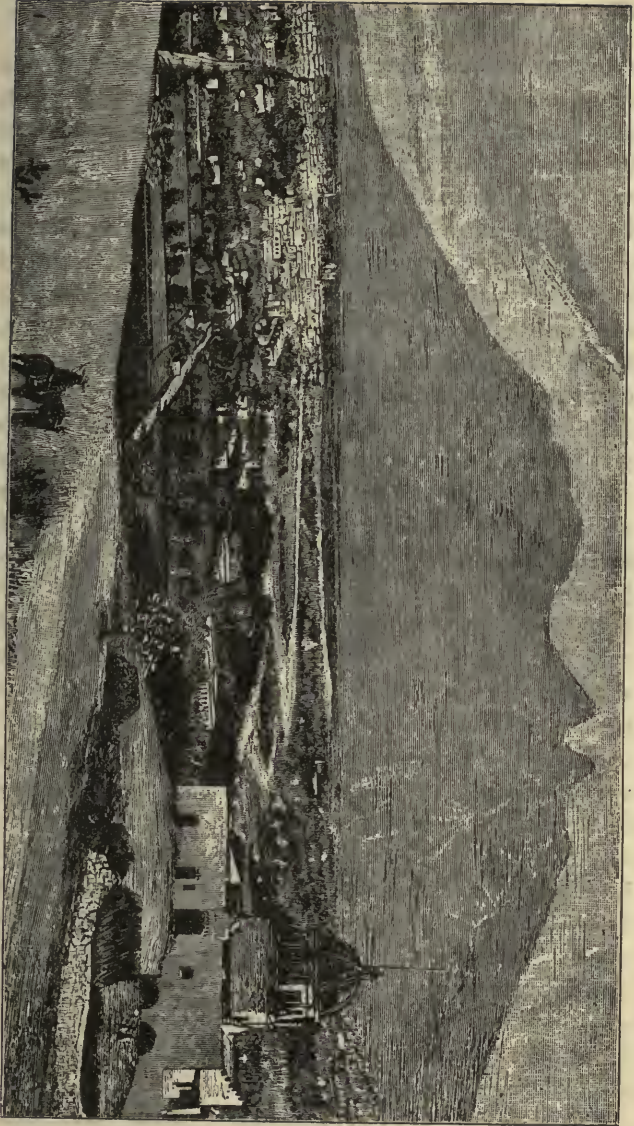


oldest cities on this continent, is on the Mexican National Railroad, about six hundred miles north-east from the capital. It stands at the head of a beautiful valley, on the Rio Catarina, one of the tributaries of the Rio Grande. It is entirely shut in by mountains whose strange shapes give to the scenery a peculiar character which cannot be lost when the tide of travel shall sweep away many other landmarks. These frowning summits are so high that the city nestling near at their base is still more than sixteen hundred feet above the sea. Streams of pure cold water flow through the streets from springs not far away. The city, embowered with orchards and gardens, has the same Moorish architecture seen elsewhere, while the fortress-like houses and the flat roofs mark it as one of the cities of olden times. A new cathedral, begun twenty years ago, is yet to be finished. The old one stands on the plaza, a pleasant spot beautified by the hapless Maximilian with winding walks, fountains and parterres of bright flowers.

Chihuahua is a city about twelve hundred miles north-west from the capital and two hundred miles from El Paso. The Mexican Central Railroad was opened through this place in March, 1884, making communication complete between this point and the City of Mexico.

Chihuahua had been subject to many inroads from the wild Indians of the North, and for years no enterprise was safe; now, what with the new railroads, telegraphs, horse-cars, omnibuses, and the whirl of American machinery in mills and factories, old times and new are in strange juxtaposition. The city stands in a beautiful valley opening toward the north between the spurs of the Sierra Madre. It is in the same latitude as is Southern Florida, but, being more than five thousand feet

CITY OF MONTEREY, MEXICO.



above the sea, the climate is almost perfect all the year round and well suited to invalids. It is regularly built, with the principal streets wide, straight and swept clean by convict labor. The plaza has its beautiful flowers and shrubbery and is surrounded by a broad promenade. In the centre is a great fountain whose large, deep basin overflows with pure water brought from an artificial reservoir in the mountains, six miles away. Morning and evening, with tall earthen jars poised on their heads, the swarthy Mexican women come to get their supply of water in this public square. The massive stone arches of the aqueduct which brings the stream are quite a feature in the suburban landscape of Chihuahua. Continuous house-fronts are quite as common here as in other cities. It has its poor quarter, where this class huddle together in miserable hovels, but most of the city has a bright and cheerful appearance. Houses are built of light-gray stone, with the owner's monogram carved over the doorway, while gilded bars defending the windows cut in the heavy walls tell of days when every dwelling was a fortress.

The police-force of the Mexican cities is generally very efficient. In Chihuahua watchmen walk the city all day with revolvers ready for action; at night they don a great *serape*, shoulder a gun and patrol the streets with huge square lanterns, calling out to each other with ostentatious regularity; and woe betide the offender who is caught disturbing the public peace and quiet in a less orderly manner than they do themselves! The next day finds him hard at work in the chain-gang, from which he never escapes until he has suffered the utmost rigor of the law.

Six hundred miles farther south, on the same rail-

road, is the city of Zacatecas, capital of the State of the same name. It is built in a cleft in the naked mountains so characteristic of this region and directly over a rich vein of silver. It is so situated that it does not come into view until one is within a mile and a half of it, and then only in sections unless one has climbed the hills to look down upon it. A number of churches and public buildings make a fine appearance.

Guanajuato has another of the curiously picturesque situations which Nature has provided for the cities of Mexico. It was founded by the Spaniards in 1545 for mining purposes. It is approached by a deep cañon. In what seems to be a collection of villages clinging to the steep mountain-sides are the houses of at least sixty thousand people. Along the winding streets or perched here and there on some "coign of vantage" are well-built houses of hewn stone. Deep as is the valley where these are situated, the whole place stands six thousand feet above the sea.

Guanajuato is the place where Hidalgo raised the standard of revolt in 1809 after gaining over the garrison, and not far away is the small village of Dolores, where he had his home.

Queretaro, also on the Mexican Central Railroad, is another city among the clouds, a thousand feet higher than Guanajuato. The whole State of which this city is the capital is remarkable for its fine scenery and its salubrious climate. Queretaro is furnished with water brought thither from springs six miles away. An aqueduct two miles long crosses the meadows on arches ninety feet high and joins a tunnel in the neighboring hills. This noble structure was built at his own expense by one of the early viceroys. In this beautiful city Max-



imilian took refuge with a few followers, and on a hill in its suburbs he was put to death. The place is also noted for the treaty of peace which was concluded here between Mexico and the United States in 1848.

At Lagos the Mexican Central branches off to the west, to San Blas.

Halfway to the Pacific coast is the quaint old city of Guadalajara, in the State of Jalisco. The bare brown hills by which it is surrounded would look dreary enough but for the gold of the sunlight and the blue of the sky, nowhere brighter than in Mexico. The city is two miles square and is laid out with straight wide streets crossing at right angles, with narrow sidewalks and one-story flat-roofed houses built about a large courtyard. It is a city of churches. The sky-line is everywhere broken by domes and spires with minarets and round towers built by men who learned architecture from the Moors. It has a beautiful *alameda* and many fine old trees, with arcades surrounding the public square in the centre of the city. Dominating all is the great cathedral with its decorations of blue and gold and a spire two hundred feet high; this building was very much injured by the great earthquake in the early part of this century. Among so many demolished churches and churches at auction and churches given away, it is remarkable that Guadalajara is building a new one which when completed will be very magnificent. To preserve the building from earthquakes a huge cross has been erected within the walls.

Guadalajara boasts sixteen public squares and many fine public buildings, the State university, the mint, the palaces of the governor and the archbishop and the largest theatre in America. Nor is it behind in modern



CITY OF QUERETARO.

improvements—electric lights, telephones and telegraphs, besides the railroad which links it to the Atlantic and the Pacific, and a college for girls. Outside the city limits are a number of factories, Guadalajara being the chief centre for wool and cotton industries.

Puebla, nestled among the cloud-capped summits overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, ranks next to the capital in size and importance. From this situation, seven thousand feet above the sea, is a magnificent outlook. The climate is unsurpassed even in this land of perpetual spring. Puebla is connected by a branch road with the railway from Vera Cruz to the capital. Its wide, clean, well-drained streets, imposing churches, substantial houses and delightful surroundings of hill and grove are pleasant to look upon whichever way the eye may turn. The whole place had an air of thrift and enterprise before the great awakening of recent years. Its cotton- and flouring-mills, foundries, porcelain- and glass-works and the manufacture of pulque make it quite a business centre, but it is chiefly noted as one of the holy cities of Mexico. Its cathedral is proudly called "De los Angeles," from the old tradition that after its massive towers had been upreared the angels came down each night and helped to decorate the magnificent interior. Its pillars, ninety feet high, support a graceful dome from whose centre hangs a ponderous chandelier whose solid gold and silver are tons in weight. The high altar, of translucent marble inlaid with gold, was a gift of one of the bishops. Some of its great stones are as exquisite in color and finish as is any gem in a lady's ring. The image of the Virgin shrined here is almost life-size, and is so bedizened with pearls and emeralds and diamonds as to be worth millions. Delicate and airy wood-carvings,

splendid tapestries wrought in old Spain by royal hands, paintings by old masters, a wilderness of statuary gilded and graven and sanctified by years of worship, make the cathedral of Puebla one of the sights of Mexico. Here, also, in a city of churches, convents and priests, was a branch of the Inquisition, under the care of Dominican friars; its buildings have recently been purchased from the government by the Methodist mission. One of the gilded rooms of which they took possession had in its walls a door which had been plastered up. This was knocked open, and a room was found in which were many human skeletons. The hapless victims had evidently been let down through a well-like opening overhead and left alone to die, the living among the dead. From the courtyard of this terrible prison thirteen cartloads of human bones were taken before it could be made suitable for the purposes of the mission.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

*"A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE."*



IN 1524,  
when Cor-  
tez was forg-  
ing the chains  
of Mexico and

rebuilding the con-  
quered city, a flame  
burst out in Europe  
which soon grew to a  
general conflagration.  
The peasantry of Ger-

many were literally interpreting  
God's good news of "liberty to the  
captive and the opening of the prison

to them who are bound." The printing-press stood ready to speak for them, and thousands of handbills—probably the first ever thrown to the winds—were scattered broadcast, proclaiming the gospel of freedom for the people. The hard-working Germans were roused to a new sense of their manhood. When the spokesman of their great multitude came to plead their cause with

the army of the Empire, he had an open Bible in his hand, and, pointing to the sacred pages, he exclaimed, solemnly, "We ask nothing which is not promised to us here by the founders of Christianity." In time these peasants were crushed, but others rose in their stead; their inspiring thought lived on. The Reformation bore fruit in new longings for liberty. Long-buried truths dropped in many a crevice of old foundations had been for two hundred years silently making their way into the light and the air; they were now forcing apart each hindering clod and stone, and proving that

"One germ of life is mightier  
Than a whole universe of death."

Ancient thrones and citadels fast gave way before the new principle that power should be invested in the people. From the outset the ruling classes traced this idea to the Bible, which Luther had just then put into the hands of the people in their own language, and both the book and its reader were hated accordingly.

There seems to be a natural antagonism between the Church of Rome and a Bible which common people can read. Throughout Christendom this precious book was for centuries concealed from the masses in a dead language, until it became an almost forgotten part of that "whole armor of God" which he has commanded his Church to take in her spiritual warfare. The gospel which had been preached to the poor had thus a political outcome over which kings, priests, and even Reformers themselves, trembled. It is true that Protestantism became at times a political engine, but God worked through it in fulfillment of his own word: "Every valley shall be exalted and every hill brought low."

It was in the thirteenth century, when all Europe was arousing from the torpor of the Dark Ages, that translations of the Bible into several vernacular languages first appeared. In this great movement Spain was a leader. King Alphonso the Wise caused a Spanish translation of the Bible to be made in 1260 "for the improvement of the Castilian language;" this manuscript may be seen in the library of the Escorial. In 1478, fourteen years before Columbus discovered America, we hear of a Spanish Bible published in the city of Valencia. The feeling of the priesthood over this enterprise is shown by the fact that the work was suppressed and the impression burned. Scarcely a copy escaped.

But little seems to have been known, however, of these translations by the common people, who most needed them; for when Francis de Enzinas, a pious Spaniard, desired for his countrymen the treasure of God's word in their mother-tongue, he went to Wittenberg to be, as he supposed, a pioneer translator of the New Testament into Spanish. He did the work under the eye of Melanchthon. The first edition, dedicated to Charles V., was published in the year 1544. De Soto, the confessor of the emperor, warned him of the dangerous tendencies of this book, and poor Enzinas, though he had been promised the royal patronage, was arrested and thrown into prison. The printing of one verse of his translation in capital letters nearly cost the bold man his life. It was Romans iii. 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

"For what reason," said the inquisitors, when they tormented him with questions, "have you had this

Lutheran maxim set in capital letters? It is a very grave offence, and deserves burning."

"This doctrine was not devised in Luther's brain," replied Enzinas; "its source is the mysterious throne of the eternal Father, and it was revealed to the Church by the ministry of St. Paul for the salvation of every one that believeth."

While in confinement and in the face of death at the stake Enzinas translated the Psalms and preached the gospel to all who would hear him.

It is pleasant to record the escape of this bold confessor after a long imprisonment. He had become very sad one night, depressed in mind and body, and, going to the grating of his cell for air, he discovered the door to be unfastened. He passed through this, and found the second unlocked also, and then the third, which opened into the street, as though an angel had unbarred them as did Peter's heavenly visitor.

These facts show that Spain was in possession of the word of God when she extended her sceptre over the pagans of America. The ambition of her military adventurers there was not only to enrich her coffers with golden spoil, but to conquer a new world for the pope.

Never did the Church of Rome have a grander opportunity than in Mexico to give to perishing souls the gospel as it is set forth in God's word. Almost every tribe had bowed to the yoke of Spain and accepted the religion imposed by their conquerors; but during the three centuries of Spanish rule the Bible seems never to have been brought to this dark shore, or, if it was, the book was hidden away in some mouldy library, to be read by priests alone. If the voice of the Reformation ever



sounded in this region and shadow of death, it was soon silenced by the Inquisition, which had a dungeon-grave for every gospel inquirer, whether in Europe, in Asia or in America. God has not been without his witnesses in every age and in every country, but the names of few shine out to human eyes in the annals of the Church in Mexico. The historians of no Christian land were so silent with regard to the Reformation as were those of Spain. Yet thousands of whom the world knows little or nothing died there for the faith of Jesus. Among those who left only a name was Juan de Leon, who lived in Mexico and fled from that country to Spain, only to be arrested there by the Inquisition and burned at the stake in 1559, a heroic martyr for Christ.

Never were printing-presses watched more vigilantly than were those of Spain at that time. No book could be sold or read without an order from the Inquisition; a bookseller dared not open a bale of goods without its permission. The same rules were faithfully carried out in Mexico. Even one obnoxious passage in a whole edition of books was erased, and some volumes thus mutilated can to-day be seen in libraries there. Cardinal Ximenes, one of the chief promoters of the Holy Office, gave it as his opinion that "the Holy Scriptures should be confined to the three ancient languages which God with mystic import permitted to be inscribed over the head of his crucified Son." We do not find, therefore, any mention of Bible translation or Bible printing in Spanish America until 1831, when liberal principles began to assert themselves even in the Church of Rome by a new version of the entire Bible prepared by eight Mexican priests and published in the capital by Ribera in 1833. Before that time, however, a Spanish New

Testament had been secretly circulating in Mexico. Spanish prisoners of war had taken with them to Spain and to her former colonies in this country thousands of copies of the New Testament translated by Enzinas and published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Amid the wild havoc of war the blessed story "of Jesus and his love" was breathed in many an ear as this little book sped on his errands of peace. The fruit of such seed-sowing appeared along many a path yet untrodden by other messengers of the cross. The Rev. Dr. Bingham, then secretary of the American Bible Society, went into Mexico in 1826, and everywhere found a great thirst for the word of God. He shipped to the capital five hundred Bibles and one hundred and thirty New Testaments. It was his opinion that up to that time not more than two thousand copies of the Scriptures had ever reached Mexico.

The Mexican clergy seem to have been divided among themselves as to the expediency of circulating the Bible. At one time a poster appeared on the inside door of the cathedral in Vera Cruz announcing the publication of a Spanish Bible with notes, under the patronage of the archbishop; the same notice appeared in Mexico. But this edition was in thirty parts and cost, unbound, eight dollars a copy. Another record tells us that the only terms on which a Spanish Bible could be procured was by the payment of thirty dollars for the book itself, and thirty dollars more to the curate of the parish for the privilege of reading it. The bargain was completed when the buyer solemnly promised not to read his treasure in the presence of wife, children or servants.

Such a case is reported in the *Bible Record* for 1880. A gentleman was traveling in Mexico, in the wildest

part of the country, where great danger was to be feared from brigands. As he walked along he saw in the distance a clump of trees, and in the little space among them, sitting in a circle on the ground, were several men. He feared that he had run into the very danger he was trying to avoid, but put on a bold face and pushed on. As he drew nearer he saw an old man reading aloud to the others from a book. The men rose as he came up to them and received him politely, and, making room in their circle, invited him to sit down on the ground with them. Seeing that they meant no harm, he accepted their invitation. Taking his seat next the old man, he asked to see what he was reading. To his surprise and joy he found that the circle had a copy of the New Testament published by the American Bible Society.

Another story is to be referred, probably, to a still earlier date. Many years ago, when Mexico was almost wholly without the Bible, a Mexican gentleman who owned a large *hacienda* in one of the northern provinces became acquainted in a very remarkable manner with the saving truth of the gospel. He was wealthy, and employed so many to serve him that he might be said to own a village. He was proud of his Spanish ancestry, and delighted to tell of the time when those of his family who first came from Spain to America became the fortunate possessors of an image of wood called San Roman, said to have been found floating in the water in mid-ocean. His ancestors named their estate in New Spain after this image; they built a chapel for it, and worshiped it. When the season was dry, as it often was, they brought San Roman out and carried him in solemn procession about the place, hoping in this way to bring

refreshing rain. In case of sickness or any other trouble they prayed to San Roman and gave to him the glory which a true Christian gives only to God. The planter of San Roman could neither read nor write, and not a person on his great estate was any better off than he in this respect. One day, while in Matamoras on business, a Mexican gentleman showed our friend a book which he called the word of God. He had heard of God and of his Son, but never before that this great Being had written anything that men could read.

"Was it a letter," he asked, "or a history?"

The planter persevered in his inquiries until he had heard enough about this wonderful book to want it with all his heart, and at once he offered the owner twenty silver dollars for it. The gentleman would not sell it for any money; he too valued it as a priceless treasure.

But the planter of San Roman was not to be put off.

"You can get another copy," he said, "and I cannot. I have never heard till now that God had sent any message to this world, but, since he has, I must have it. Take the twenty dollars, and I'll keep the book." So saying, he folded the precious volume under his *serape* and rode away.

The planter had nearly fifty miles to go before he reached the house of a friend who could read this wonderful message to him. He stopped his horse at the door and called out to his friend to go home with him; "for," said he, "I have a book—a strange book—for you to read, and I want my family to hear it too. I do not know how to wait until you shall open it to me;" adding, with a solemn air, "It is the word of God to men."

The friend thus appealed to was not so much interest-



ed in this precious treasure as was the planter, and he was at first unwilling to go on such an errand ; but, being urged, he mounted his horse, and the two men rode on to San Roman.

No sooner had the planter reached his home than he ordered the ringing of the great bell which called the hands in from every part of the estate. Hearing the sound at this unusual hour, the people came crowding to the large *patio* of his mansion. He ordered every one to be seated to hear important news. After a few words of explanation, the master turned to his friend and said,

“Now begin at the beginning, and read on until we shall understand.”

The reader held a small Spanish Testament in his hand and opened it at the first chapter of Matthew. Verse after verse the hard, strange names rolled over his tongue, as meaningless to the listeners as were the Latin prayers they had been accustomed to hear mumbled when they went to mass. At last he came to the twenty-first verse, which declares that Jesus shall save his people from their sins. The people began to get some light and were interested. The story of the wise men from the East and the little children who were killed in Bethlehem made a great impression. And so they went on with the story of Christ's baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, the death of his friend John, the feeding of the “five thousand men, beside women and children.” Missionaries of our own time tell of Mexicans who sit up all night to hear the Bible read, and these people had the same thirst for the word of God which characterizes many of their ignorant countrymen.

When the reader began the story of Christ's betrayal, murmurs of sorrow ran through the listening company. Where the Saviour was crucified, they wept and bowed their heads. How sad, how dark, the outlook for those who had already learned to love the sinner's Friend! But, thanks be to God, the story did not end there; the cross and the grave were not all. Christ rose again; he walked and talked with his disciples, and then ascended on high as a conqueror, saying at the last, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

As the wonderful story was finished the master rose, and, looking around upon his family and people, said,

"There was one thing I was most glad to hear: it is that last word of Jesus, when he tells his disciples to go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. They were to teach every one everything he had taught them. Now, my friends, some of these men will come to San Roman to tell us this good news, to instruct us as the Lord instructed them; they will soon be here, no doubt. Meanwhile, I must learn to read this wonderful book, and you, my sons," turning to them, "must learn too, in order to read again the story of the Saviour's life and to do what he commands us. The disciples have been a long while coming to us, but the world is large, you know; they will certainly come, for Jesus thus has commanded them."

The owner of San Roman and his sons at once began to learn to read the precious book. The good news was read from time to time to every one on the plantation, and there, as of old in Judea, the common people heard Christ gladly. Year after year they met on the Lord's day as the apostles taught, until at last a Christian settlement flourished where once San Roman was worshiped.

That old image was soon forgotten. No more flowers or jewels were offered at the forsaken shrine, and no incense went up with the prayers to a senseless block of wood.

At length the planter heard that a man who talked like the book was in Matamoras. He got on his horse quickly and went in search of him. He would bring him to San Roman, where so many were waiting and longing for Christ's messenger.

The preacher was soon found, for just then all Matamoras was stirred with his words; but it was with great difficulty he could be persuaded to go so far into the country. He had come to Matamoras on only a short visit, and must go back to his own flock. But the planter would take no denial. Go he must, and go he did, to preach to the people of San Roman.

Once more the great bell was rung, and the people came crowding into the *patio* to hear that gospel which had now become the word of life to them all.

When the sermon was over, the host had a question to ask:

"Sir, you have not told us why you were so long in coming to us. Did not Christ tell you before he went up that you were to preach the gospel to every creature? How long ago was that?"

"Eighteen hundred years," replied the missionary, awed by the look of sad surprise which his host had turned upon him.

"'Eighteen hundred years'! And what were the disciples doing, that they did not teach all nations long ago? Surely the Lord said, 'I am with you alway'?"

"Yes," replied the missionary, sadly, "there is par-

don for sin, and they ought to have spread the news; but for many long years the Church has been asleep over her duty. But you have heard it, and let us pray that the Holy Spirit may work in the hearts of God's people until their love and faith and zeal shall carry the news of salvation not only throughout Mexico, but to the utmost bounds of the earth."

When war broke out between the United States and Mexico, in 1846, agents of the Bible Society followed the invading army. The pioneer missionary in Mexico, however, was Miss Melinda Rankin, a devoted school-teacher from New England, who took her place in Brownsville, Texas, just over the border, long before Mexico was opened, and there besieged one gate to this benighted land. The kind of faith which can say to a mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," was hers.

Poor vanquished Mexico was yet distracted with internal troubles, bleeding with wounds our country had inflicted upon her, and too ignorant of her real degradation to know that those of her own household were her worst enemies. While affairs south of the Rio Grande were in this forlorn condition, Miss Rankin, listening to the sad stories told by returning soldiers, felt that something must be done for poor Mexico. "Who," she continually asked with voice and with pen, "will go to the rescue?" Her efforts were all in vain. Then she resolved to go herself. She could not preach, but she could teach. She was told that Texas was given up to outlaws, and that even if she could pass there in safety through dangers the Mexicans were too embittered against the United States to listen patiently to what she said.

But love for perishing souls was stronger than all these



fears. In 1852, after some delay at Huntsville, Texas, Miss Rankin opened a school for Mexican children in Brownsville, Texas, just opposite Matamoras, in Mexico. In this school the Bible was daily and faithfully taught. Some of her pupils lived across the river, and frequently returned to their homes in Mexico carrying with them the New Testaments she gave them. These girls were watched by a company of French nuns who had established a school close by Miss Rankin, and also by the Romish priests everywhere. Sometimes their Testaments were snatched away and burned by lynx-eyed inquisitors, but most of them escaped, and many are to-day bringing forth a harvest of a hundredfold.

In 1855, Miss Rankin became convinced that the work of Bible-distribution required the whole time of one person, and applied to the American and Foreign Christian Union (New York) to seek for a Christian man who could speak Spanish to come to Brownsville and, as the door opened, to enter Mexico. But such a man could not be found, and rather than see the work hindered Miss Rankin secured the services of an assistant in her school and devoted herself to Bible-distribution. American friends said, "The Mexicans turn your Bibles over to the priests to burn." After investigation, it was found that this was very seldom the case. She says, "I found that the Mexicans concealed them in the most careful manner, taking them out and reading them by night. I went one day to the house where one of my pupils resided to ask concerning her absence, and also to make inquiry after a Bible I had furnished her. A report had crept into the school that she had exchanged it with the nuns for a saint, and that they had burned it. The mother of the girl met me at the door, and with stream-

ing eyes told me that her daughter had died of yellow fever but a short time before. I asked if she had her Bible. She replied, 'No; I put her Bible in her coffin, as she loved it so much, and it was buried with her.' " Orders came now for dozens of Bibles at once, accompanied by money to pay for them.

Miss Rankin was greatly aided in her labors by a traveling German portrait-painter. While attending to his business he visited the homes of many wealthy people far in the interior, in many places so remote that they knew comparatively little of the great struggle which was then going on over Protestantism, or, if they did, had those about them who were thirsting for the word of God. It was among the poor his message was most gladly received. He often, however, encountered violent opposition, but his heart was burdened with the spiritual needs of distracted Mexico, and he was willing to suffer the loss of all things—even of life itself—for Christ's sake. He finally lost his life in Mexico; whether he was killed as a Bible-distributor or for the purposes of robbery was never ascertained.

In 1859 a light finally dawned upon the long night of darkness in Mexico. On Christmas day the liberal army under Juarez entered the capital in triumph; only the night before, Miramon and his defeated forces had fled away. It was a glorious victory for those who advocated religious freedom. The great change was heralded over the land by ringing of bells and firing of cannon. Matamoras, on the northern border, was illuminated, and joined in the general rejoicing. Miss Rankin says, "As the noise from Matamoras broke on my ear I thought I never had heard more delightful sounds, and my heart bounded in joyful anticipation that God's word could

now have free course and be glorified." Men immediately came over from Matamoras for Bibles and tracts, saying, "We can now distribute Protestant books without any hindrance, and we will pay you for all you can let us have."

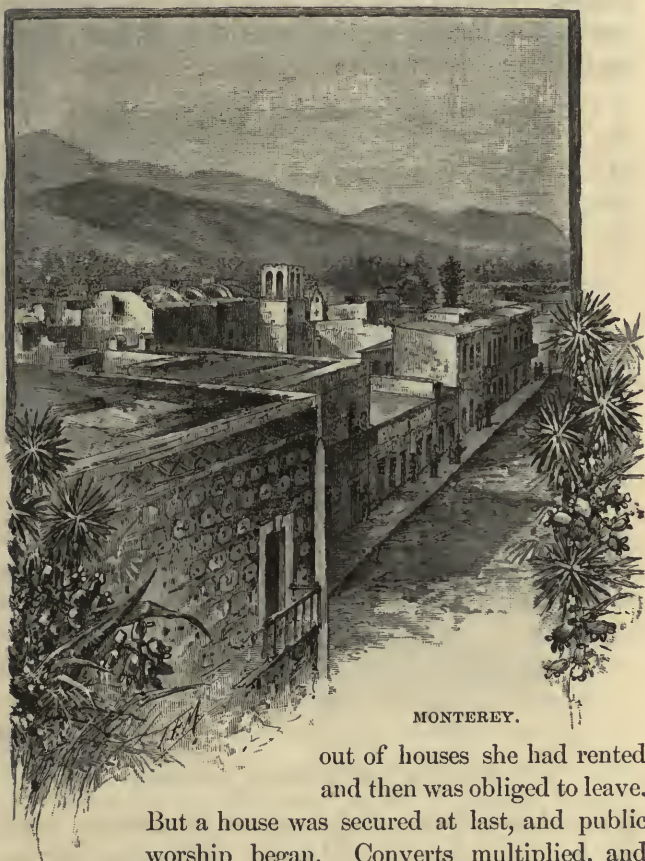
In 1860 the American Bible Society employed the Rev. Mr. Thompson to labor as their agent in Mexico, the authorities encouraging his work. As far as Monterey he found that the Bible had preceded him everywhere. At Cadereita, thirty miles from Monterey, a man met him with the abrupt question, "Are you not a teacher of the Bible? I have dreamed of just such a looking man as you; I knew that somewhere there must be the living teacher of this book." It was found that this man was well read in the Scriptures. He had thrown aside popery, embraced the gospel, and gave good evidence of being truly "born again." In 1861 this Mexican and his eldest son came to Brownsville, and after careful examination were received into a Protestant church, the first Mexicans who dared to come out publicly and profess the Protestant faith.

In 1861, Miss Rankin and her helpers were shut out by the civil war from communication with friends in the United States, and Mr. Thompson returned to the United States.

Rev. James Hickey, being obliged, as a Union man, to flee from Texas, went to work in Mexico; he was the first man to collect a congregation of Protestant Mexicans. In two places he found churches ready for organization, the result of Bible-reading alone.

After laboring for years amid many perils and some disasters, Miss Rankin's long-cherished desire was granted, and in 1866 she crossed over into Mexico and began

work in the beautiful city of Monterey. The hostility of the priests was so great that during the first three months of her stay in that city she moved three times



MONTEREY.

out of houses she had rented and then was obliged to leave.

But a house was secured at last, and public worship began. Converts multiplied, and some of them were by this time capable of instructing their countrymen in the truths of the Bible. She selected four of these young men and asked them if they



would be willing to preach Christ among their people. They hesitated—not for want of love to their Master, but because they were laboring-men and had families to support. Finding that they needed but thirty dollars a month, Miss Rankin resolved to set them at work, trusting for their support to the liberality of Christian friends



CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO, MONTEREY.

in the United States. Sad to relate, this resource failed her just now when the field was so white to the harvest, and, taking her life in her hand, as she had done so many times before, this noble woman went to the United States to lay the cause before the women of its Protestant

churches. These Christian sisters took the measure of her plan, and sent her back to her work with a heart newly inspired with love and faith, believing that the day would soon come when she should see "the gospel preached in Mexico by the Mexicans themselves." She had secured funds which enabled her to employ not only four, but eight, men.

As soon as possible Miss Rankin gathered her laborers together and prepared to send them out two and two, as in apostolic days. The morning came for their departure, and she noticed that two of the young men looked troubled.

"Why are you anxious?" she kindly asked.

The men said they expected opposition, and were particularly afraid of a priest who would meet them with arguments against the Bible. They were so ignorant; how could they answer him?

Miss Rankin opened the Bible at the tenth chapter of Luke and drew attention to these words: "And he sent them two and two before his face to every city and place *whither he himself would come*," emphasizing the last clause, assuring the men that, as they were going out in Christ's name to preach his gospel, they might expect his presence and blessing, as he had promised. This scriptural view of the case restored confidence, and the young brethren cheerfully took up their bundles of books and departed, Miss Rankin looking after them with the joyful exclamation in behalf of Mexico, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

At the close of a month, the appointed time, every man came back with the same story that the seventy told to Jesus eighteen hundred years ago. The two

timid ones were especially happy ; even the priest they had dreaded had nothing to say against the Bible when they met him. The Bible was opened again and the story repeated, with emphasis now on these words : " Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

This work continued from month to month until the whole country within one hundred miles of Monterey had been traversed by the eight Mexican colporteurs. And now should they not press on to regions beyond if the Master made a way ? It was soon opened. Two of these young men were sent to Zacatecas, a distance of between three and four hundred miles. They were the two timid brethren who ventured forth on this long and dangerous road, accompanied by two colporteurs employed by the Bible Society. At Villa de Cos, near Zacatecas, they remained several weeks, teaching and preaching with great acceptance. " Scarcely," said they, " do we find time to eat or to sleep, so anxious are the people to hear our readings from God's word."

When, in 1873, Miss Rankin was compelled by failing health to give her Bible-work into other hands, there were hundreds of converted Mexicans, in six organized churches, with a school attached to each church and a training-school for boys in the seminary-building in Monterey. Miss Cochrane writes in 1881 : " All but one of Mr. Thomson's theological class of ten young men date their awakening to the time when Miss Rankin was here. Don Pablo, the tenth man, came from a little village where a single copy of the Bible began the work." This mission is now under the care of the Foreign Board of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1878 the first Bible-store was opened in the City

of Mexico. The passers-by stopped at its windows to gaze with mingled curiosity and awe on a book which, it was claimed, was the word of God. One peasant from the mountains, who came back to buy a Bible, had walked seventy miles for this sole purpose and in the purchase spent all that he had. He carried home the precious book, and read it to his family and his neighbors. They had no time to listen to him during the day, but they came from far and near at night to his humble cabin and took turns in furnishing him with candles. One aged couple walked twenty miles night after night to hear these wonderful words of life.

Thus we see that God has put special honor on the Scriptures of truth in the early evangelization of Mexico. In hundreds of instances in every part of the land it has preceded the missionary, and again and again congregations have been found all ready for organization as churches where the voice of the living preacher had never been heard. The reading of the Bible alone, blessed by the Holy Spirit to the saving of souls, has proved how true are the Psalmist's words: "The entrance of thy word giveth light."



## CHAPTER XXV.

### *REGENERATION OF MEXICO.*

THE people of Mexico had been praying in an unknown tongue for more than three hundred years, when a devoted priest, Francisco Aguilar, began to read and to ponder the teachings of the Holy Scripture with regard to prayer. As he studied the history of the apostolic Church the great doctrine of justification by faith loomed up before him as a new truth, and that peace which he had so vainly sought in fasts and in penances began to flow into his soul. His eyes were now opened to see the miserable perversions of Scripture which Rome had taught for truth. Like the apostle Andrew, Aguilar abode with the Master for one day, and then, eagerly seeking for some one to whom he could communicate the blessing which filled his own heart, brought a brother-priest to Jesus. Thus one friend told another, until a band of fifty Bible students had been formed whose undreamed-of strength at first woke no opposition. But as the truth spread the spirit of persecution was aroused. The Church began to thunder out its warnings and curses, but Aguilar, strong in the Lord, went on his way undismayed.

An effort had been made by a few earnest souls as early as 1861 to leave the Church of Rome and build on true foundations. This work now took shape, and in

1865 the first Protestant congregation was gathered in the capital, under the leadership of Aguilar. They called themselves "The Church of Jesus," and were known from the outset as strong advocates of an open Bible in the language of the people and of prayer in their mother-tongue. Aguilar's ministry was short, but productive. He died in 1865, a victim to the cruelty of Rome. The Church of Jesus had been put under ban. No Romanist would give or sell its members food, and they were driven out of every house where they attempted to find shelter. The pastor was among the first victims of these privations, and after his death the little flock were scattered by their relentless persecutors.

In the summer of 1868, Miss Rankin was in the United States soliciting aid for her work in Monterey, when she met the Rev. H. C. Riley, then the pastor of a Spanish Protestant church in New York and her own personal friend. Her statements convinced him that it was his duty to go to the City of Mexico, where two hundred thousand souls were sitting in almost heathenish darkness. Three years afterward Mr. Riley carried out this plan, coming to Mexico under the auspices of the American and Foreign Christian Union. His command of the Spanish language enabled him at once to take hold of the work. He had brought with him a printing-press, and this was set up and secretly began its work.

The effort to regather Aguilar's flock and organize a church resulted in a split on the subject of prelacy, a strong party preferring the simplicity and freedom of worship with which they began. As time went on one party affiliated with the "Church of Jesus," and the other—nine congregations in all—united under a Pres-

byterian form of government. The Church of Jesus adopted the old Spanish liturgy used by Christians of Spain during the centuries in which they held aloof from the Church of Rome.

At last the liberal government felt strong enough to provide the Protestants with a house for public worship. Confiscated churches by scores were standing empty, and one of the handsomest of these—the church of San José de Gracia—was sold to Dr. Riley for a merely nominal sum. The fury of the Romanists knew no bounds. They declared that the day the Protestants took possession of that church the pavement should stream with their blood.

One night, as Dr. Riley returned to his lodgings, he found a letter thrust under his door; in this letter he was told that six men had sworn to waylay and kill him. He knew that in those lawless times it would be easy for them to fulfill the threat, but said, “If life must be short, let it be earnest.”

A pamphlet exposing the errors of Rome was now sent out from the press. A copy of this was given by a brother-priest to Manuel Aguas, the most earnest and eloquent champion of the Church of Rome known in Mexico, and a bitter enemy of Protestantism. Aguas was called upon to answer at a public meeting this bold challenge of the Protestants. In order to prepare himself for his task, he took the tract home and sat up all night to read it. Other Romish priests had done the same; and had been hardened in error; but Aguas was pierced to the heart. He opened the Bible, so long neglected for the traditions of the Church, and it proved to be a sword of the Spirit to him. He wept and prayed, and at last, yielding to his convictions, he went to Dr.

Riley, saying, "Like Saul of Tarsus, I have persecuted the Church of Christ." The next time the Church of Jesus met they were astonished to see their old adversary in the pulpit preaching the faith he had once so bitterly denied.

The Romanists were panic-struck. That the man on whose devotion to Rome, on whose talents and influence, the Church had depended for their overthrow should join those despised Bible Christians was indeed a terrible blow.

When the day came for the opening service in the church of San José de Gracia, Romanists were there thirsting for Protestant blood; but Aguas was not with them. He stood boldly by the pastor, ready to die, if need be, for the faith.

The storm of persecution now raged fiercely around this devoted band, but like one inspired Aguas preached Christ and him crucified as the only salvation from sin. His whole soul was in the work. Twelve times in one week he was in the pulpit. "Destitute, afflicted, tormented" by his enemies, he toiled on for three years, until at last he sank under the tremendous strain to mind and body. His last sermon was from the text, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Aguas was carried from his pulpit to die. As sight and memory failed some one leaned over him and whispered, "Do you remember the blood of Christ?" The old light kindled again on his pallid face: "Oh yes! yes! The precious blood of Jesus!" and so he passed to his reward.

A noble band of more than forty martyrs have sealed their faith by their blood in this Church of Jesus. Man-



uel Aguas, the pastor and bishop-elect of this church, died in 1872.

Planted in fertile soil, this organization seemed destined to outnumber all others and become the leading evangelical Church in Mexico. At one time they claimed over six thousand adherents, and half that number of communicants. It is now sorely rent, however, by internal dissension. In 1884 the communicants numbered about one thousand, and fifty-two preaching-places were reported.

Elsewhere in Mexico, God's word had "free course and was glorified." In 1862 the Rev. James Hickey, a Baptist minister, began a good work in the city of Matamoras as an independent missionary. In 1863 he was preaching in Monterey. His assistant at that time, the Rev. Thomas Westrup, has since been murdered by the Indians. Mr. Hickey died in 1866.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society still holds its ground in Monterey, and has also established itself in the capital. It has (1886) six ordained ministers and a membership of three hundred. The American Baptists of the South also report stations in Saltillo, Progreso, Palos and Banas, and much that is encouraging.

"More important," says one, "than the rise and fall of states and empires is the going forth of the missionaries of the cross to Christless lands." The years 1872 and 1873 are thus marked in the annals of Mexico. Branches of the Presbyterian, Friends and Methodist churches began evangelical work there.

The Presbyterian Church built on foundations already established. Their work began in the State of Zacatecas, in Villa de Cos, a mining-town about sixty miles from the State capital, where Grayson Prevost, M. D., of

Philadelphia, then practicing medicine in Zacatecas, had gathered a company of Christian believers. These people had been interested in the religion of the Bible by a visit of Miss Rankin's colporteurs from Monterey some time before. In two years after this beginning by Dr. Prevost there was in Cos a church of one hundred and seventy members, a church-building and a religious paper started, called *The Evangelical Torch*. News of this awakening reached America, and in September, 1872, at the earnest request of Dr. Prevost, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions sent out its first band of ordained missionaries to Mexico. Protestant influences had then been at work in the capital for ten years. Among those thus inclined were many whose republican principles were so true in type that they preferred a "Church without a bishop" as decidedly as they desired "a State without a king." At nine different points in the city and the surrounding villages were congregations who had turned for sympathy to the little church at Cos. The Presbyterian missionaries, on their way to that point, stopped at the capital, and, finding there this waiting church, they ran up the old blue flag—a token there and everywhere else of republicanism of the best type in Church and State.

Mexico city, Zacatecas, San Luis de Potosi, Monterey, Jerez, Saltillo, Durango, Vera Cruz, Acapulco and Tabasco are now centres of the constantly-enlarging work of the Presbyterian Church. Says the Presbyterian Board's forty-eighth annual report: "Our Church has congregations in a continuous line of States from the Rio Grande to Guatemala, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, thus marking with a large cross the map of the republic." The northern and southern mis-

sions of this Board were united in 1884; they now centre in the capital, and are connected by rail and telegraph.

The theological seminary founded in Mexico city will soon be established in San Luis de Potosi. In this institution a force of fourteen native ministers and three licentiates has been trained and is doing efficient service, and ten other young men are preparing for the gospel ministry. A mission press is in operation, and the first number of a new paper, *El Faro* ("The Lighthouse"), was issued in January, 1885. The girls' boarding-school in the capital has (1885) 23 pupils. Another of the same character is soon to be started in the important field of Zacatecas, and one has long been in operation in Monterey.

Statistics for Mexican missions of the Presbyterian Board, as reported in May, 1885, are: Ordained ministers, foreign and native, 14; licentiates, 11; total force of native helpers, male and female, 71; organized churches, 92; church-members, communicants, 6629; adults baptized in Southern mission in 1884, 631; boarding-pupils (girls) in two schools, 68; day-pupils, 677; Sunday-school children, 1233; contributions, \$1673.

The Society of Friends (Orthodox) are doing a good work in the State of Tamaulipas, which they entered in 1872. They have an enterprising publishing-house in Matamoras, which sends out a gospel literature to all lands where the Spanish language is spoken. They have a boarding- and day-school in the same place, with 136 pupils, and a membership of about 250 in the State. About a thousand persons attend their services in six established meetings. A boys' school will soon be opened.

The Southern Presbyterians have also a mission in Tamaulipas, and report 5 churches and 331 members.

The Southern Methodists, who entered the field in 1873, are strongly entrenched in Mexico city, San Luis de Potosi, Puebla, Oaxaca, Guadalajara, Monterey and Saltillo, besides scores of preaching-places and a large ministerial force, both native and foreign. They have a church-membership of 3022. In their central mission they report 65 Sunday-schools and 1300 children enrolled. A self-sustaining boarding-school for Mexican girls has been opened in San Luis de Potosi, and a free day-school.

The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) has circuits centring in Mexico, Guanajuato, Orizaba, Pachuca, Puebla and Queretaro. A large orphanage under the care of their Woman's Foreign Missionary Society is flourishing in the capital, and schools in Puebla, Leon, Pachuca, Miraflores, Queretaro, Real del Monte and El Chico. This mission reports, in 1885, churches, 14; full members, 625; probationers, 674; local preachers, 16; Sunday-schools, 18; scholars in Sunday-schools, 764; contributions, \$1102.

The American Board of Foreign Missions (Boston) began work in 1872 in Guadalajara, a city of some eighty thousand inhabitants, situated on the west coast, in the State of Jalisco. They found here at first a wonderful spirit of inquiry among the people. Within a few months there were several conversions. Bitter hostility was soon provoked, and Mr. and Mrs. Watkins were stoned in the street by a company of men and boys.

In November of 1872, Rev. Mr. Stephens, an unmarried missionary, visited Ahualulco, a small town about



ninety miles from Guadalajara. Here he had a home and a welcome from a few sympathizing friends, and for several days he held meetings every evening in a room provided for him. It was decided that Mr. Stephens should take up his residence in this place, where the people were so much interested that they would sit for hours at a time to listen, and crowd about him afterward to buy Bibles and tracts. For three months he had great encouragement, and the majority of the people tolerated, and even favored, the Protestants. This success so exasperated the curate of the parish that he preached a most exciting sermon to his people, mostly Indians, in which he said, "It is necessary to cut down even to the roots the tree that bears bad fruit. You may interpret these words as you please." An extract from a Mexican paper gives the sad result of this appeal: "At two o'clock on the 2d of March the house of Mr. Stephens was assaulted by a mob crying, 'Long live the *cura*! Death to the Protestants!' They forced the doors and entered, destroying and stealing everything they found. Mr. Stephens was brutally assassinated, his head severed into several parts and his body very much mutilated." One of the Protestants was killed at the same time, and Mr. Watkins was threatened, but escaped, and others among the Protestants were assaulted and in danger from poison.

In 1876, in spite of bitter persecution—always traceable to the priests—the converts in Guadalajara numbered one hundred and fifty. The experience of the laborers here as elsewhere in Mexico proves that "in no portion of the unevangelized world is the preaching of the simple gospel of Christ likely to encounter more determined opposition than in countries decidedly Roman

Catholic; that in no other land is that opposition, when not held in check by civil authority, more likely to proceed to murderous violence."

With all that makes Mexico one of the most fruitful of mission-fields, it has been called with truth one of the most difficult and dangerous. Scarcely one of the early Protestant churches but has its martyrs, and sometimes many of them. The Church of Jesus has had forty. One missionary writes: "More than once I have looked out on a sea of maddened creatures ready to tear me limb from limb, almost succeeding in forcing an entrance into the house, even cutting a large hole in the door, but held back by the unseen Hand." The same writer says, "The Mexicans are a revolutionary people more used to a breach of than obedience or respect to law. At times they seem to be incapable of anything which is necessary in deliberative bodies."

The Church party has stirred up the worst elements of society against the Protestants. Again and again the hand of a bishop or other dignitary of the Church has been discerned behind the scenes of violence which are constantly occurring. The advice of the curate of Ahualulco has more than once been given to stir up a fanatical mob. In one case the preacher gave the street and number where Protestant missionaries could be found. In Capulhuac, an Indian town not far from the capital, Louis Gonzales, the first man who dared to present his child for baptism in a Protestant church, was killed for his audacity; at Tisapan five of the brethren who came out were murdered in seven years. Until 1880, Protestants were often forced by mob-law to bow to the Host as it was carried about in processions, but

the law guaranteeing religious liberty is no longer a dead letter.

The Presbyterian church in Capulhuac (just referred to) has had an interesting history. It was organized in 1873. For a long time the services were held in a secluded pine-forest on the mountain-side over-against the place. After many threats from their enemies, they were warned that an attack was about to be made upon them. An armed mob started for their retreat one Sunday afternoon, and were seen crossing the valley to make their way up the hillside, when a violent thunder-storm suddenly arose and so darkened the air and blinded their adversaries with pelting rain and hail that the little flock escaped unharmed.

One of the Bible Society's colporteurs was one day seeking to find the residence of a Methodist brother in the city of Leon. He had the difficulty in finding the street and number which is common in Mexican cities, but at last he came to a house which bore marks of a recent assault. The windows had been broken with stones, and the walls were well spattered with mud. "This house has been mobbed lately," he said; "it must be the one I am looking for;" and on inquiring he found his conjecture correct.

Another colporteur tells of a brother Martinez, an earnest Protestant preacher, who went to visit the family of a convert in a town called Rancho de Dios. The townspeople had been making a new road between their place and Zacatecas, some miles distant, and they had invited the bishop of Zacatecas to be the first to ride over it. Unhappily for himself, Brother Martinez came riding into town first, taking, of course, the new road. Finding that he was a Protestant, they rushed upon him,

tore him from his horse, tied him hand and foot, built a fire and burned his books and papers, and were preparing to burn him on the blazing pile when one of the authorities of the town, who was a friend of the Protestants, came up brandishing his sword among the crowd and scattered them, but not until they had succeeded in burning off the poor man's beard and hair. The police were obliged to shut Mr. Martinez up in the town-jail to protect him from the mob which still thirsted for his blood.

The Presbyterian church in Zacatecas has been many times tried in the fires of persecution. Part of an abandoned Catholic church was rented by the Protestants. That this imposing structure should fall into heretic hands, its saints be taken down from the walls and Scripture texts put in their places was most exasperating. What gave a keener point to the indignity was the fact that the building had been erected by the Inquisition for its peculiar uses, and that in making necessary repairs the secrets of that awful tribunal had been unveiled—the torture-chamber, the rack and pulley, and even human skeletons with nails in their temples, and other relics of the horrid work of the Holy Office. The transfer was no sooner decided upon than bishop and priests united in plans for “putting an end to all Protestants.” The mob were ready with knives and pistols, waiting in the cathedral itself for the order to rush upon the Protestants then assembled in their part of the edifice. These latter were out in large numbers. Even the Sunday-school children came and joined in the songs of praise which many a brave heart there thought might prove to be his last on earth. Happily for the almost defenceless church, the bishop and his friends had a



quarrel with the governor as well as with the Protestants, and the city authorities, coming to the rescue of the latter, prevented the intended massacre. The whole of this vast building is now used for Protestant worship, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions having sanctioned the purchase. It is a four-story edifice, with balconied windows and solid stone walls very rich in carving and other ornamentation, and can easily accommodate a thousand persons in its audience-room.

In 1875 fourteen Protestants were killed in Acapulco in a riot stirred up by an attempt to establish a Presbyterian mission there. The missionary who accompanied the party was obliged to flee for his life. He was taken for shelter on board a man-of-war then in the harbor. He made his way back to his home in Mexico city, a distance of three hundred miles, by going up the Pacific coast from Acapulco to San Francisco, thence overland to New York, and so by steamer and rail to Vera Cruz and the capital. The little flock already gathered in Acapulco, scattered at that time, "went everywhere preaching the word." Two of them who fled to Southern California were instrumental in gathering a circle of believers there, who were afterward found ready for organization as a church when a missionary came upon the ground. In less than a year after the massacre of their brethren thirty new centres of light appeared in mountain-villages in that region, and nearly five hundred believers traced their conversion to that time of bitter persecution. Native brethren had supplied their friends with Bibles and tracts, which had been secretly circulated and read. When the region was visited by missionaries, in 1883, there were thirteen congregations in and about Acapulco, and six churches ready for or-

ganization. The Rev. Procopio Diaz, who lost two fingers in the riot of 1873, came now as a welcome visitor. He took up his abode in Chilpanzinco, the capital of the State of Guerrero, where the governor was so friendly to the Protestants that he kept Bibles in his house for circulation. One of the church-members in Chilpanzinco died recently, and his funeral was the first ever conducted on Protestant principles in the State. The glorious hopes of the gospel shed a new and strange light on a scene too often marked by irreverence.

In addition to the usual irritation felt in isolated places against new Protestant enterprises, there are now many tokens of a revival of old prejudices. Says a mission report in 1885, "The pressure of opposition from the reactionary party in Mexico is greater than for many years past." The priesthood have charged Protestant ministers from the United States with being secret agents for their government, and that they are there only to prepare the way for the annexation of Mexico to the United States. Several mobs have resulted from inflammatory appeals to their religious feelings and their patriotism.

Following these appeals to mob law came the martyrdom of a faithful brother, Rev. Nicanor Gomez, pastor of the church in Capulhuac. He had gone with two sons, one of them also a minister of the gospel, to lay the foundations of a new and promising church in Almaloya, near Toluca. Not finding the official who was to give sanction to this enterprise, Mr. Diaz, another pastor, and several of the brethren waited his arrival in the house of a neighbor. There were evidences that a riot was determined on to prevent the Protestants from

holding their services. People began to crowd in from other towns. Soon the Romish church-bell began to ring, and the crowd flocked thither. Two of the Protestants, suspecting mischief, went also. In the sermon the priest told the Romanists that, "at whatever cost, the Protestants must be prevented from holding their service; they were heretics, enemies of their country, abandoned in their moral character, and ought to be destroyed." Thus stimulated, the crowd rushed to the house where the brethren were waiting. The justice of the peace was there, but not the prefect or the police. Soon with wild shouts the surging mob came down on them with showers of stones. The Gomez brothers slipped out by a back door and went to bring the horses. The Rev. Mr. Diaz, assisted by his brethren, succeeded in getting on his saddle, and escaped with a few bruises from clubs after being chased two miles, but the elder Gomez, weakened by the blows he had received, was dragged to the ground in attempting to mount, and was so badly stoned that after lying unconscious for a short time he died.

"Twelve years ago," says a missionary writer, "this plain Mexican, Nicanor Gomez, while passing along the street was attracted to a book-stall, on which he found a copy of the Bible. Purchasing it, he began to study its contents, and, becoming more interested; he invited his wife to join him in reading it. After a while he called in his neighbors and opened his house to a meeting for the study of the Scriptures and for prayer. Thus a small congregation grew up, for whose accommodation he gave up the principal room in his humble abode, he and his family being content with less commodious quarters. Thus for several years he carried on religious ser-

vices, being assisted only to a partial extent by the mission. He had, mainly by his own labor and resources, nearly completed a small chapel, which was about to be dedicated when death put the seal on his labors for the cause of Christ."

The history of this church enterprise is the counterpart of many another in Mexico. The good seed finds a scriptural variety of soil, but that which falls on good ground is wonderfully prolific. Little Bible-reading circles are found in out-of-the-way places in almost every missionary tour. The story of Don Demas Zitary is a case in point. He is a blacksmith working at his anvil all the week and preaching twice on Sunday to a thriving little church, which has been built up by his efforts. As he was walking out one evening with a visiting missionary he pointed to a large wooden cross on a hill near by. The ground around it was strewn with sharp flints, so common in the country. The blacksmith said that when he was a young man several priests came to his neighborhood from Zacatecas on a collecting-tour, and also to exhort the people to penance for the salvation of their souls. The fervent appeals of these priests so excited the crowd that they all consented to walk barefoot in procession over these sharp stones, each with a crown of thorns pressed on his forehead and a rough rope around his neck; "and," said the narrator, "I was one of those who walked with bleeding feet around that cross."

Another layman, Don Mateo Goitia, a pure Spaniard, is doing a noble work for the Master in the same neighborhood. When young he was a bigoted Romanist. At one time, when looking over some old clothes and books which he had taken for debt, he came across a Spanish



New Testament. He became interested in it, and read it over and over again, till its truths sank into his heart. He saw the falsities of his old faith. He was convicted of sin. He left off his former bad habits, and, as his new principles shone out in his changed life, he drew others to study a book which had brought such blessed results. He now set up a church in his own house; in two years sixty persons were worshiping there. In 1880 the members numbered eighty-seven.

There is something in the loving zeal of many of these untutored laborers for Christ which promises wonders for the future of the Church in Mexico.

The story of the introduction of the gospel into the State of Michoacan, as gleaned from the letters of Rev. J. M. Greene, gives a touching feature of humble Christian service in connection with the labors of Rev. H. Forcada and other native brethren among the Indians of that region. Mr. Forcada's first visit was to Junapeo, a small town among clustering villages in the lowlands west of the capital. A few Bibles and tracts had been sold or given by a Mexican bookseller in Zitacuaro a few years before, and these had no doubt been doing a silent work ever since among the people. But in 1876, when Mr. Forcada came, Junapeo received him very coldly. Shelter was most unwillingly given him in the village inn, and the storekeeper positively refused to sell the heretic anything. After three months' faithful work Mr. Forcada deemed best to abandon Junapeo for the time. He would not go, however, until he had asked the Master to have his way made so plain that he could not mistake it. That very night the little room where he had been holding meetings was full. The work increased in power. The inhospitable innkeeper was con-

verted and became a pillar in the Protestant community. For five years the religious meetings were held free of charge in his large parlor. His wife, once a bigoted Romanist, was equally zealous after her change of heart, and taught her poor neighbors daily.

In time, Brother Rodriguez's quarters grew too strait for the people who flocked to hear a free gospel, and they began to build a church. Mr. Rodriguez gave a lot and six hundred and seventy-four dollars toward the building, besides superintending the work. The house, sixty feet by twenty-seven, cost twenty-six hundred dollars, of which ninety of the people gave ten hundred and ninety dollars. Four young brethren who are supporting themselves while they study for the ministry did the work on pulpit, tables, benches, etc. for their contribution, while the story of the sixty beams which support the roof is as interesting as though the scene had been laid where the old Sidonians hewed cedar trees out of Lebanon for the temple in Jerusalem: "When the walls of the church were complete, it became necessary to secure sixty stout beams thirty-six feet long. To have bought them in Junapeo would have cost ninety dollars. A good brother in Ahuacate, eighteen miles away, hearing of their need, sent them word that they were at perfect liberty to enter his pine forest and cut free of cost all the beams they needed. The offer was promptly accepted. All the oxen in the neighborhood belonging to the brethren or their friends were brought together, numbering thirty yoke, with two men to each yoke. On a Monday morning they started. Brethren along the road gave men and oxen their meals, and cared for them at night. Three days were necessary for the round trip, so that by Saturday night the thirty-six miles had

been twice traversed and sixty fine beams were ready to be placed on the walls. The oxen were furnished without charge. The sixty brethren each gave a week of his time without cost, and the work was all done as a voluntary offering to the Lord. As I looked at those beams afterward, neatly hewed and placed in position, they seemed to me sermons in wood, objects as sacred as the gold which was given for the tabernacle, and I doubt not that they were equally acceptable to God."

When the church was done, eight of the brethren walked fifteen miles to Zitacuaro after an organ which had been sent to them by friends in the United States. As Junapeo lies three thousand feet lower and it was impossible to carry such a load on muleback down the steep mountain-paths, these men carried it on a sort of bier, accomplishing the labor of love by nightfall of the same day.

The house was dedicated on New Year's Day, 1883. Such crowds—men, women and children, most of them on foot—came from far and near that the opening services were held out of doors. Wrapped in their blankets, they camped out under the open sky. In the tropical climate of Junapeo this was the best arrangement which could be made for such a mass of perspiring humanity. But there came a time when the house had to be packed to its utmost capacity. Fifty persons were admitted to the church on confession of their faith on that occasion. We quote again from Dr. Greene: "As I looked over that audience of five hundred, filling all the benches and seated on the floor, the great mass of humble Indians clothed in white muslin, who receive eighteen to twenty-five cents a day, not more than one in ten of whom could

read, and as I noted their earnest and devout attention to the reading of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and to the preaching; as I saw the peace and joy reflected on their faces, and in some cases the tear of penitence or gratitude stealing down their cheeks,—I longed to be able to photograph the scene and place it before all our Christian people at home who have loved and prayed for the Mexican work as a proof to them that their gifts and prayers have been most signally blest."

Junapeo has its counterpart in many a town and hamlet in Mexico. Help from abroad seems to stimulate to the utmost these generous people. The Indians, the chief actors in every anti-Protestant riot, furnish also the greatest numbers in the harvest of souls gathered by Protestant missions. The heaviest part of the work of evangelization now going on in Mexico is done by native brethren whose zeal and faithfulness have already been blessed to the saving of hundreds of souls in fields which have been entirely tilled by them. As soon as possible it is intended that the work shall be left entirely in the hands of the native ministry.

Many who are noting the signs of the times in Mexico believe that greater persecutions are in store for Protestants there than they have yet experienced. The star of conservatism seems to be once more in the ascendant, and Rome rejoices. She is still plotting against every principle on which Mexican liberties have been established. But, amid the turnings and overturnings to which these revolutionary people are subject, Christ is building up his kingdom among them on foundations firmer than the great mountains on which their cities stand. As "a leader and commander to the people" he



has already caused his standard to be lifted up in this land. They are gathering out the stones and casting up his highway, and some happy day "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever."

## APPENDIX.

JUST as this volume goes to press, a book by the Hon. David A. Wells, LL.D., entitled *A Study of Mexico*, is issued from the house of D. Appleton & Co., New York. The following table, showing the population and the area of each of the States of Mexico according to the census of 1879, is from this book:

| Order of<br>density of<br>population. | Name.   | Area in<br>square<br>miles. | Number of<br>population. | Pop.<br>per sq.<br>mile. |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1                                     | The Federal District (City of Mexico) . . . . . | 463                         | 351,804                  | 759                      |
| 2                                     | State of Mexico . . . . .                       | 7,840                       | 710,579                  | 90                       |
| 3                                     | “ “ Morelos . . . . .                           | 1,776                       | 159,160                  | 89                       |
| 4                                     | “ “ Tlaxcala . . . . .                          | 1,622                       | 138,958                  | 85                       |
| 5                                     | “ “ Guanajuato . . . . .                        | 11,413                      | 834,845                  | 73                       |
| 6                                     | “ “ Puebla . . . . .                            | 12,019                      | 784,466                  | 65                       |
| 7                                     | “ “ Queretaro . . . . .                         | 3,205                       | 203,250                  | 63                       |
| 8                                     | “ “ Hidalgo . . . . .                           | 8,161                       | 427,350                  | 52                       |
| 9                                     | “ “ Aguas Calientes . . . . .                   | 2,897                       | 140,430                  | 48                       |
| 10                                    | “ “ Michoacan . . . . .                         | 23,714                      | 661,534                  | 27                       |
| 11                                    | “ “ Jalisco . . . . .                           | 39,174                      | 983,484                  | 25                       |
| 12                                    | “ “ Oaxaca . . . . .                            | 33,582                      | 744,000                  | 22                       |
| 13                                    | “ “ Vera Cruz . . . . .                         | 26,232                      | 542,918                  | 20                       |
| 14                                    | “ “ San Luis Potosi . . . . .                   | 27,503                      | 516,486                  | 18                       |
| 15                                    | “ “ Zacatecas . . . . .                         | 22,999                      | 422,506                  | 18                       |
| 16                                    | “ “ Colima . . . . .                            | 3,746                       | 65,827                   | 17                       |
| 17                                    | “ “ Chiapas . . . . .                           | 16,048                      | 205,362                  | 12                       |
| 18                                    | “ “ Guerrero . . . . .                          | 24,552                      | 295,590                  | 12                       |
| 19                                    | “ “ Yucatan . . . . .                           | 29,569                      | 302,315                  | 10                       |
| 20                                    | “ “ Tabasco . . . . .                           | 11,849                      | 104,747                  | 8                        |
| 21                                    | “ “ Nuevo Leon . . . . .                        | 23,637                      | 203,284                  | 8                        |
| 22                                    | “ “ Sinaloa . . . . .                           | 36,200                      | 186,491                  | 5                        |
| 23                                    | “ “ Tamaulipas . . . . .                        | 27,916                      | 140,137                  | 5                        |
| 24                                    | “ “ Durango . . . . .                           | 42,511                      | 190,846                  | 4                        |
| 25                                    | “ “ Campeachy . . . . .                         | 25,834                      | 90,413                   | 3                        |
| 26                                    | “ “ Chihuahua . . . . .                         | 83,751                      | 225,541                  | 2                        |
| 27                                    | “ “ Coahuila . . . . .                          | 50,904                      | 130,026                  | 2                        |
| 28                                    | “ “ Sonora . . . . .                            | 79,020                      | 115,424                  | 1                        |
| 29                                    | Territory of Lower California . . . . .         | 61,563                      | 30,208                   | $\frac{1}{2}$            |
|                                       | Total for the Republic . . . . .                | 739,700                     | 9,908,011                | 13.4                     |

The following facts are given by Mr. Wells concerning the past and the present of the Church in Mexico. After the downfall of Maximilian, when Juarez became the undisputed and practically absolute ruler of the country, the entire property of the Mexican Church was at once "nationalized" (a synonym for "confiscated") for the use of the State. Mr. Wells thus describes the change that resulted:

"Every convent, monastic institution, or religious house was closed up and devoted to secular purposes, and the members of every religious society, from the Jesuits to the Sisters of Charity who served in the hospitals or taught in the schools, were banished and summarily sent out of the country. And so vigorously and severely is the policy of subjugating the ecclesiastical to the civil authority—which Juarez inaugurated in 1867—still carried out that no convent or monastery now openly exists in Mexico, and no priest or sister, or any ecclesiastic, can walk the streets in any distinctive costume or take part in any religious parade or procession; and this in towns and cities where twenty years ago or less the life of a foreigner or skeptic who did not promptly kneel in the streets at the 'procession of the Host' was imperiled. Again, while Catholic worship is still permitted in the cathedrals and in a sufficient number of other churches, it is clearly understood that all of these structures and the land upon which they stand are absolutely the property of the government, liable to be sold and converted to other uses at any time, and that the officiating clergy are only 'tenants at will.' Even the ringing of the church-bells is regulated by law. All these rites, furthermore—which the Catholic Church has always 'classed as among her holy sacraments and exclusive privileges, and the possession of which has constituted the chief source of her power over society—are also now regulated by civil law. The civil authority registers births, performs the marriage ceremony and provides for the burial of the dead, and, while the Church marriage ceremonies are not prohibited to

those who desire them, they are legally superfluous and alone have no validity whatever.' (See *Report on Church and State in Mexico to the State Department* by Consul-General Strother, December, 1883.)

"How the lower orders of the Mexican people other than the distinctive Indian population regarded the proceedings of the government against the Church is thus described by M. Désiré Charney in the account of his researches in Central America: 'Upon the suppression of the monastic orders in Mexico, and the confiscation of the property of the clergy, and the demolition of certain churches and convents, the multitude protested, but without violence. The *leperos*, all covered as they were with medals, rosaries and scapulars, pulled down the houses of their fetiches, while the old women—indignant witnesses of the sacrilege—ejaculated their *avés* without ceasing. The exiles had fulminated the major excommunication against whoever should have act or part in the work of demolition or should tread the streets cut through the grounds of the torn-down convents, but after a week or so all fear vanished, and not only did the destroyers go about their work without remorse, but they even used the sacred wood-work of the churches to make their kitchen-fires, and the new streets had their passengers like the older ones.'—*North American Review*, October, 1880.

"Mr. Strother, who has studied the matter very carefully, suggests that an explanation may be found in the character of the Indian races of Mexico, who constitute the bulk of the population, and 'whose native spirit of independence predominates over all other sentiments.' He also throws out the opinion that 'the aborigines of the country never were completely Christianized, but, awed by force or dazzled by showy ceremonials, accepted the external forms of the new faith as a sort of compromise with the conquerors.' And he states that he has himself recently attended 'religious festivals where the Indians assisted, clothed and armed as in the days of Montezuma, with a curious intermingling



of Christian and pagan emblems, and ceremonies closely resembling some of the sacred dances of the North American tribes.' It is also asserted that on the anniversaries of the ancient Aztec festivals garlands are hung upon the great stone idol that stands in the court-yard of the National Museum, and that the natives of the mountain-villages sometimes steal away on such days to the lonely forests or hidden caves to worship in secret the gods of their ancestors. But, be the explanation what it may, it is greatly to the credit of Mexico, and one of the brightest auguries for her future, that after years of war and social and political revolutions, in which the adherents both of liberty and absolutism have seemed to vie with each other in outraging humanity, the idea of a constitutional government based on the broadest republican principles has lived, and to as large an extent as has perhaps been possible under the circumstances practically asserted itself in a national administrative system.

"When the traveler visits the cities of Mexico and sees the number and extent of the convents, religious houses and churches which, having been confiscated, are either in the process of decay or occupied for secular purposes, and in the country has pointed out to him the estates which were formerly the property of the Church, he gets some realization of the nature of the work which Juarez had the ability and the courage to accomplish. And when he further reflects on the numbers of idle, shiftless, and certainly to some extent profligate, people who tenanted or were supported by these great properties, and who, producing nothing and consuming everything, virtually lived on the superstitious fears of their countrymen—which they at the same time did their best to create and perpetuate—he no longer wonders that Mexico and her people are poor and degraded, but rather that they are not poorer and more degraded than they are.

"What amount of property was owned by the Mexican Church and clergy previous to its secularization is not cer-

tainly known—at least, by the public. It is agreed that they at one time held the titles to all the best property of the republic, both in city and in country, and there is said to have been an admission by the clerical authorities to the ownership of eight hundred and sixty-one estates in the country, valued at seventy-one million dollars, and of twenty-two thousand lots of city property, valued at one hundred and thirteen million dollars, making a total of one hundred and eighty-four million dollars. Other estimates, more general in their character, are to the effect that the former aggregate wealth of the Mexican Church cannot have been less than three hundred million dollars; and, according to Mr. Strother, it is not improbable that even this large estimate falls short of the truth, ‘inasmuch as it is admitted that the Mexican ecclesiastical body well understood the value of money as an element of power, and, as bankers and money-lenders for the nation, possessed vast assets which could not be publicly known or estimated.’ Notwithstanding, also, the great losses which the Church had undoubtedly experienced prior to the accession of Juarez, in 1867, and his control of the State, the annual revenue of the Mexican clergy at that time, from tithes, gifts, charities and parochial dues, is believed to have been not less than twenty-two million dollars, or more than the entire aggregate revenues of the State derived from all its customs and internal taxes. Some of the property that thus came into possession of the government was quickly sold by it, and at very low prices, and, very curiously, was bought, in some notable instances, by other religious (Protestant) denominations, which previous to 1857 had not been allowed to obtain even so much as tolerance or a foothold in the country. Thus, the former spacious headquarters of the order of the Franciscans, with one of the most elegant and beautifully-proportioned chapels in the world within its walls, and fronting in part on the Calle de San Francisco, the most fashionable street in the City of Mexico, was

sold to Bishop Riley and a well-known philanthropist of New York, acting for the American Episcopal missions, at an understood price of thirty-five thousand dollars, and is now valued at over two hundred thousand dollars. In like manner, the American Baptist missionaries have gained an ownership or control in the city of Puebla of the old palace of the Inquisition, and in the City of Mexico the former enormous palace of the Inquisition is now a medical college, while the Plaza de San Domingo, which adjoins and fronts the church of San Domingo, and where the *auto-da-fé* was once held, is now used as a market-place. A former magnificent old convent, to some extent reconstructed and repaired, also affords quarters to the National Library, which in turn is largely made up of spoils gathered from the libraries of the religious 'orders' and houses. The national government, however, does not appear to have derived any great fiscal advantage from the confiscation of the Church property, or to have availed itself of the resources which thus came to it for effecting any marked reduction of the national debt. Good Catholics would not buy 'God's property' and take titles from the State, and so large tracts of land and blocks of city buildings passed at a very low figure into the possession of those who were indifferent to the Church and had command of ready money; and in this way individuals rather than the State and the great body of the people have been benefited."

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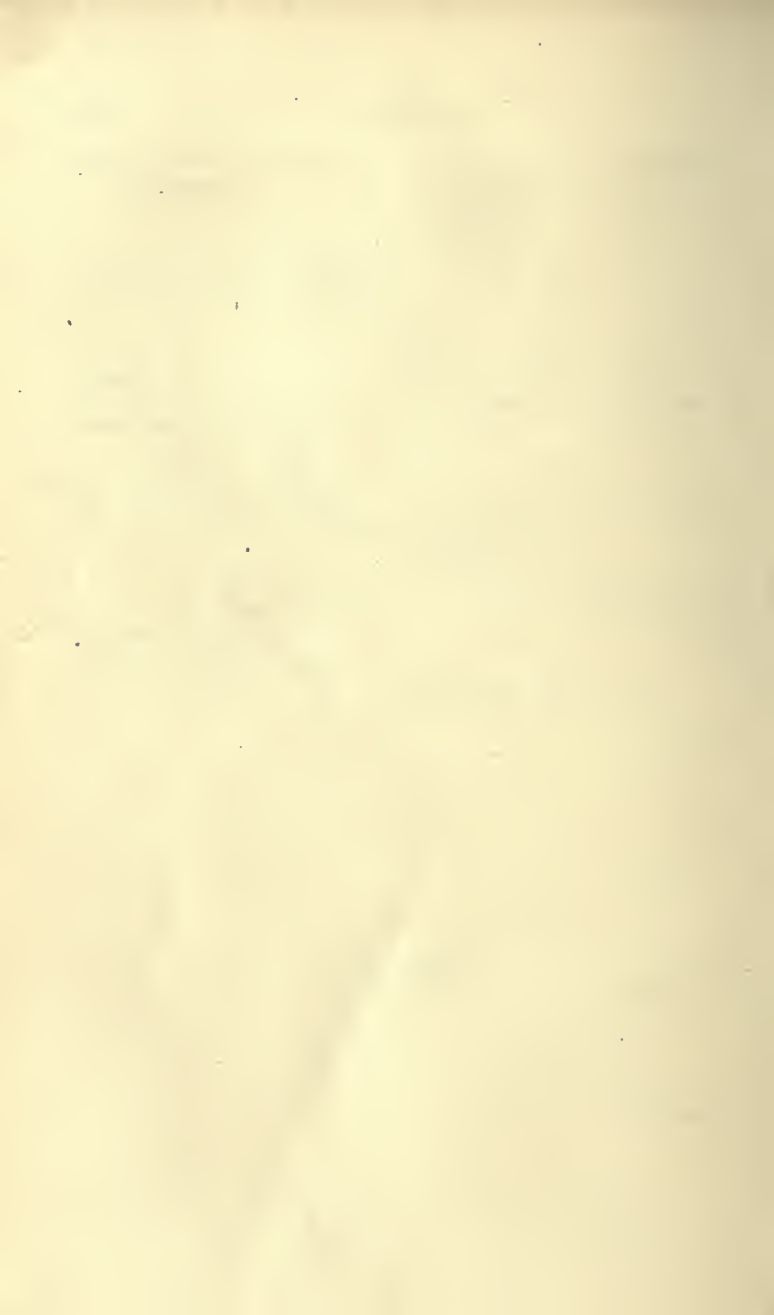
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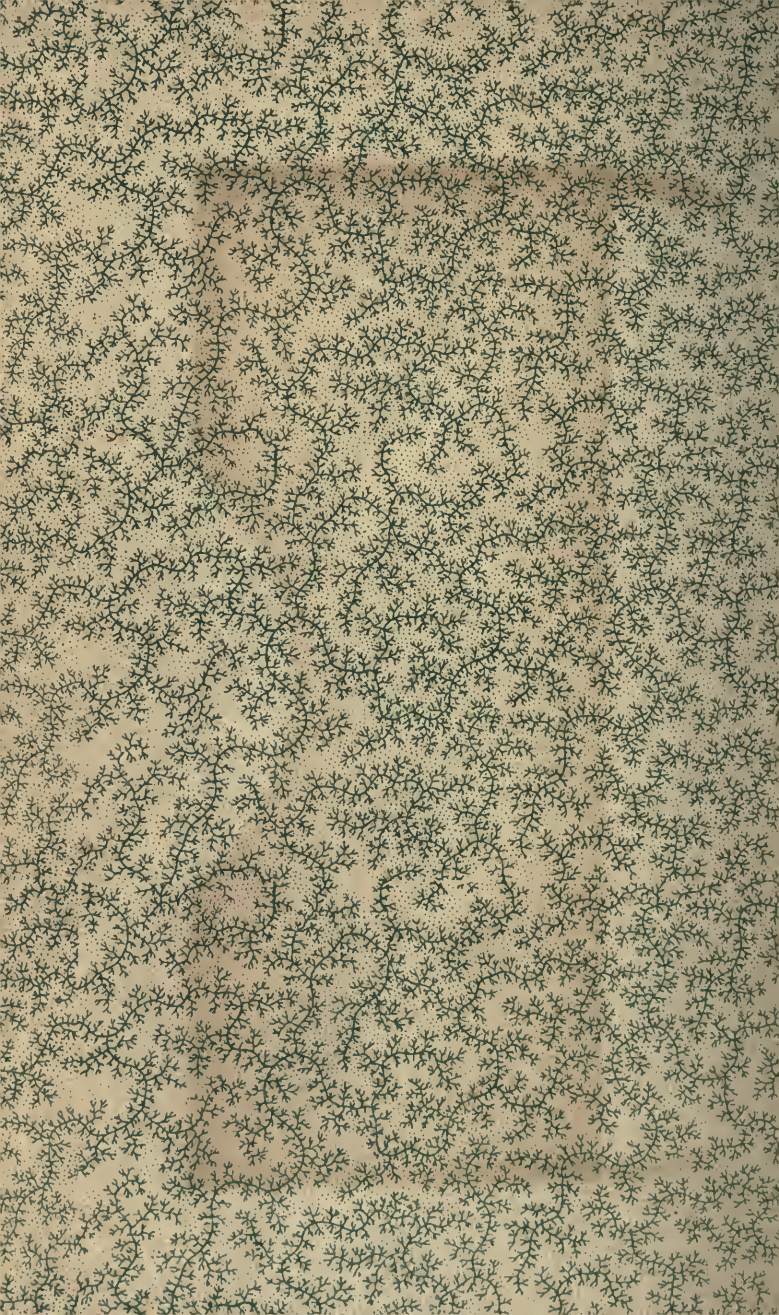












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